

Hafa Adai!

Santos opposes SMA plan to reopen Guam/Rota flights. PAGE 2
'Company is paid \$4,749 a day to sanitize Multi-Purpose' PAGE 3

\$1

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84 new cases; 1,559 recovered

By JOSHUA SANTOS
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Health-care Corp. announced Monday night that 84 positive cases of COVID-19 were confirmed on Dec. 19, bringing the CNMI's total to 2,506. CHCC

AT A GLANCE

As of 6:26pm, Dec. 21, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population: 92.2%

Fully Vaccinated: 33,775

Days since last community transmission: 2

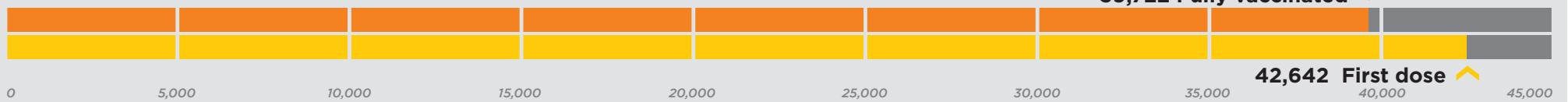
Pfizer/BioNTech			
Initiated:	36,262		
Fully Vaccinated:	33,775		
Moderna			
Initiated:	5,263		
Fully Vaccinated:	4,830		
Janssen			
Fully vaccinated:	1,117		

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	19,372	35	19,407
Recovered	18,880	29	18,909
Active	193	35	228
Deaths	270	0	270

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	2,422	84	2,506
Traced via Travel Screening	282	0	282
Traced via Community Screening	2,140	84	2,224
Deaths	8	0	8

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



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The art of wrapping gifts: Tips from pro-wrapping Sierra Lei Kileleman and Cody.

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SUPPLEMENT

We ask business owners and community members for their biggest wish this Christmas.

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LIFE & STYLE

Chris Noth will no longer be part of "The Equalizer" in the wake of sexual assault allegations.

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Local

Santos opposes SMA plan to reopen Guam/Rota flights

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Sen. Teresita A. Santos (Ind-Rota) has expressed strong opposition to Star Marianas Air's plan of reopening direct flights between Guam and Rota on Jan. 1, 2022, fearful that it may compromise the health and safety of the people of Rota amid this ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Santos recommended last week to CNMI COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren Villagomez to defer the implementation of the Rota/Guam direct flight until such time the situation is "properly assessed."

She recommended maintaining the health protocols that have been in practice since the start of the pandemic, ensuring that the health and welfare of people continue to be safeguarded.

The lawmaker reiterated her position that Saipan, unlike Rota, has the manpower, CNMI government-approved quarantine facilities, infrastructure, resources, and the seasoned experience necessary to handle what may arise. "Let us continue to utilize

the system that works and hopefully in the very near future, we can revisit the discussion to open the direct flights without compromising the health, welfare, and safety of our people," said Santos in her letter to Villagomez.

The senator strongly recommends that the task force first meet with the Rota municipality leadership prior to making any decisions to talk about their strategies and quickly adjust for the new COVID-19 variant. She underscored the importance of conducting town hall meetings at each village on Rota to listen to people's concern.

She said if a majority of people feel that it would be in the best interest of the whole to delay this endeavor, then it could be revisited in the next six to 12 months.

The senator also asked if the task force has assessed the feasibility of designating a quarantine facility on Rota.

"Do we have the human resources and medical equipment necessary to ensure that patients will receive the best

care possible?" she asked.

Santos said overcoming access disparities imposed by Rota's geographical location can hinder the very best of intentions, hence the critical importance of planning and taking into considerations the deficiencies.

The senator said she will continue to ask that passengers entering Rota be mandated to take a



Santos

COVID-19 test 24-48 hours prior to boarding their flight. If this is not possible, she said, then there should be nurses or trained individuals at the airport ready to test each passenger as they disembark.

Santos said she understands that it would be difficult to prevent the virus from eventually reaching Rota, but the task force has done its job thus far. "We must continue to be vigilant and implement additional prevention strategies," she said.

Rota is COVID-19-free.

The senator said it only takes one person to begin the spread.

She noted that Saipan and Guam are currently struggling to deal with the community spread and its medical and contact tracing teams are exhausted.

Stressing that her foremost concern will always be the health and welfare of Rota's people, Santos said public convenience can be implemented at a later date and should not trump nor take precedence over people's health.

Starting last Dec. 1, Star

Marianas suspended all its interisland flights, citing risks presented by an "unhealthy flight environment." Last Dec. 9, Star Marianas returned to operation, providing organized charters among the three islands—Saipan, Timian, and Rota.

Star Marianas Inc. general manager Jose Cruz recently informed Villagomez and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther L. Muna that they intend to resume daily flights between Rota and Guam on Jan. 1, 2022.

Man pleads guilty to license fraud

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man has pleaded guilty to his involvement in the unlawful production of a CNMI driver's license in 2019.

Xiaoqin Wu pleaded guilty before U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona last week to one count of conspiracy to unlawfully produce an identification document.

Manglona said in her order that after reviewing the plea agreement, she found that Wu

was fully competent to enter a knowing, voluntary, and intelligent plea. The judge then ordered Wu to return to court on April 22, 2022 at 1:30 pm for his scheduled sentencing.

Wu, who appeared out of custody, was represented by court-appointed attorney Robert T. Torres, while Hua "Mike" Yang served as his interpreter. Assistant U.S. Attorney Garth Backe appeared for the federal government during the proceedings.

During the hearing, Torres waived his client's right to an

indictment, which the court accepted.

Currently, Wu remains out of prison with conditions, after submitting an unsecured appearance bond.

According to the factual basis of the plea agreement, on or about Feb. 15, 2019, Wu conspired with an individual known as "Zhang" to "knowingly and without lawful authority produce...a fraudulent CNMI driver's license, and the prohibited production, transfer, possession, or use was in or affected interstate or foreign commerce," it stated.

The plea agreement states

that Wu did not have lawful U.S. immigration status so he paid Zhang \$300 to help him obtain a fraudulent CNMI driver's license.

"The defendant knew that it was illegal to obtain a driver's license without legal immigration status. In furtherance of their plan, defendant gave Zhang \$300 and sent Zhang a photo image of his 2017 CNMI driver's license via WeChat. Sometime later, Zhang gave defendant the fraudulent CNMI driver's license that (Zhang) had unlawfully produced," the document said.

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Yes! We're
BACK

'Company is paid \$4,749 a day to sanitize Multi-Purpose'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A sanitation service company

that is allegedly owned by Jesseleo Taimanao Ogo, who just resigned last month as the sports coordinator at the Of-

ficer of the Governor, is being paid \$4,749 per day just to sanitize the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in



NEW GRADUATE

Congratulations to Dajmarch dela Paz Ong, who graduated last Sunday from the University of Guam with a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice and Public Administration, with magna cum laude honors. Your parents, Jonmarch and Debbie, are proud of you and your accomplishment.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

WWII-era munitions will be blown up today in Marpi

A munitions team will be detonating vintage World War II-era munitions at the Saipan Marpi Blow Pit today, Dec. 22, 2021, from 12:30pm to 4pm.

This means the Marpi Road, Marpi Landfill, Banzai Cliff, Suicide Cliff, and Grotto will be closed starting at 12:30pm for the duration of this operation.

In a notice yesterday from the CNMI Emergency Operation Center-State Warning

Point, it said a HydroGeologic Munitions Team will be detonating the vintage munitions at the Marpi Blow Pit and the public is being warned to stay away from this site within 500 feet radius on all quadrants up to 2,500 feet above sea level.

Due to the danger imposed by these activities, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres is strongly advising the public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots, and marine tour op-

erators—to stay away from these areas during the time and date indicated.

The cooperation and understanding of the public is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions, contact the CNMI Emergency Operation Center-State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000, VHF Marine CHNL 16, and HF single side band radio on 5.205.0 for this advisory. (PR)

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NOTICE OF REGULAR SHEFA BOARD MEETING

In accordance with 1 CMC § 9901 et seq., as amended, the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance (SHEFA) Board is hereby giving notice of its regular board meeting, to be held on December 22, 2021, at 9:30 a.m., Office of SHEFA conference room, 2nd Floor, CTC Building, Oleai, Beach Road, Saipan.

AGENDA

- I. Preliminary Matters
 1. Call to Order
 2. Roll Call
 3. Adoption of agenda
 4. Adoption of Minutes from November 24, 2021
- II. Public Comment(s)
- III. Committee Reports
 - a. Committee on Awards
 - b. Committee on Appeal/Deferments/Forbearance
 - c. Committee on Policy and Procedures
 - d. Committee on Program and Development
 - e. Committee of Fiscal, Legislative, and Community Affairs
- IV. Administrator's Report
- V. Chairman's Report
- VI. Old Business
 1. Guam Marianas Training Center
 2. Fall 2021 application status
- VII. New Business
 1. Spring 2022 application status
- VIII. Executive Session
- IX. Miscellaneous Matters
- X. Next Meeting
- XI. Adjournment

/s/ Oscar M. Babauta,
Chairman, Board of SHEFA Directors

The lawmaker said that is nearly \$2 million a year for a sole proprietorship company.

"You could probably build a new multi-purpose building for that amount," Propst said.

He said Ogo resigned as a sports coordinator last Nov. 20, but submitted an invoice last Nov. 16.

The invoice shows \$4,749.50 daily charges, or \$142,485 monthly charges, for disinfection application at the Multi-Purpose Center, and \$752 daily charges,

or \$22,560 in monthly charges, for disinfection application at the Medical Care and Treatment Site Testing Tent.

Ogo claimed in the invoice to have a total of \$165,045 in monthly charges, with \$66,015 amount due, and \$99,027 in remaining balance.

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OMICRON

From Page 1

last week, federal health officials said Monday.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention numbers showed nearly a six-fold increase in omicron's share of infections in only one week.

In much of the country, it's even higher. Omicron is responsible for an estimated 90% or more of new infections in the New York area, the Southeast, the industrial Midwest and the Pacific Northwest. The national rate suggests that more than 650,000 omicron infections occurred in the U.S. last week.

Since the end of June, the delta variant had been the main version causing U.S. infections. As recently as the end of November, more than 99.5% of coronaviruses were delta, according to CDC data.

CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said the new numbers

reflect the kind of growth seen in other countries.

"These numbers are stark, but they're not surprising," she said.

Scientists in Africa first sounded the alarm about omicron less than a month ago and on Nov. 26 the World Health Organization designated it as a "variant of concern." The mutant has since shown up in about 90 countries.

Much about the omicron variant remains unknown, including whether it causes more or less severe illness. Early studies suggest the vaccinated will need a booster shot for the best chance at preventing omicron infection but even without the extra dose, vaccination still should offer strong protection against severe illness and death.

"All of us have a date with omicron," said Dr. Amesh Adalja, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security. "If you're going to interact with society, if you're going to have any type of life, omicron will be something you en-

counter, and the best way you can encounter this is to be fully vaccinated."

Adalja said he was not surprised by the CDC data showing omicron overtaking delta in the U.S., given what was seen in South Africa, the U.K. and Denmark. He predicted spread over the holidays, including breakthrough infections among the vaccinated and serious complications among the unvaccinated that could stress hospitals already burdened by delta.

Dr. Eric Topol, head of the Scripps Research Translational Institute, said other countries had seen omicron's fast growth, but the U.S. data showed "a remarkable jump in such a short time."

Topol also said it's unclear how much milder omicron really is compared with other variants. "That's the big uncertainty now."

CDC's estimates are based on thousands of coronavirus specimens collected each week through university and commercial laboratories and state and local health de-

partments. Scientists analyze their genetic sequences to determine which versions of the COVID-19 viruses are most abundant.

On Monday, the CDC revised its estimate for omicron cases for the

week that ended Dec. 11, after analyzing more samples. About 13% of the cases that week were from omicron, not the 3% previously reported. The week before, omicron accounted for just 0.4% of cases.

84

From Page 1

have been 1,559 recoveries, 651 active cases, and five COVID-19-related deaths of the cases identified since Oct. 28.

As of Dec. 20, there are 12 active hospitalizations: seven patients are unvaccinated, five vaccinated, and two of the 12 are on a ventilator.

Of the 84 new cases, 67 were found through contact tracing and 17 through community testing, with the vaccination statuses of the 84 pending verification as of Monday night.

'We want to be able to have the best protection'

Ahead of the holidays, CHCC chief executive officer Esther L. Muña advises the public to practice safety at gatherings, whether it be through holding them outdoors or opening windows so there is proper air circulation indoors.

Making a guest appearance during Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' radio news briefing yesterday Muña reiterated her message to the community to follow the "3 W's" (wear a face mask; wash your hands; watch your distance), and even advised avoiding what the World Health Organization calls the "3 C's" (crowded places, close-contact settings, and confined and enclosed spaces).

Muña said that she and CHCC are monitoring the effects the omicron variant of COVID-19 is having on the United States, and is taking into

account the unknowns surrounding the variant's possible impact on the CNMI's health care system and community.

To keep yourself safe, Muña urged the community to receive their COVID-19 booster shots if due and eligible for it. "We don't know what [impact] the omicron variant [may have] on this community, and we want to be able to have the best protection," she said.

Briefly mentioning ongoing vaccination efforts, Muña said she was glad to see many people continuing to make the decision to get vaccinated against COVID-19. "When we had our first community case here in the CNMI, I did ask, 'What are you waiting for?' ... and I have to say that I'm very, very happy to see a large number of individuals that did get vaccinated," she said.

In its most recent news release, CHCC reported that 511 COVID-19 vaccine shots were administered on Dec. 20. In recent past releases from CHCC, vaccination turnout has hovered around the triple digits. Also, CHCC on its social media pages on Sunday marked one year since the first COVID-19 vaccine was administered in the CNMI.

Currently, 92.2% of the CNMI's eligible population is fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Muña said a larger portion of eligible individuals have received at least their first shot of a COVID-19 vaccine, and she estimated that there may be less than or around a 1,000 individuals in the CNMI who have not yet received their first shot.

HOUSE

From Page 1

T. Attao (R-Saipan) as chairman of the Special Investigating Committee on Impeachment that will evaluate whether to impeach Torres.

Villagomez also appointed to the committee eight members—Republican Reps. Angel A. Demapan, Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero, and Patrick H. San Nicolas, and Democrat Reps. Christina E. Sablan, Corina L. Magofna, and Leila C. Staffler, and independent Reps. Joseph A. Flores and Donald M. Manglona.

Villagomez said this committee is authorized to issue subpoenas. He said the committee will have 30 days to submit a written report on the impeachment resolution, House Resolution 22-14, unless Attao asks for additional time.

Gilbert Birnbrich, who is the counsel for the Office of the Governor, asked Villagomez yesterday not to include Sablan in the committee as she has already announced her intent to run as governor under the NMI Democratic Party in the November 2022 gubernatorial election.

Birnbrich said the committee should also not include those representatives who have previously expressed an opinion on the guilt of Torres.

In response to a question during a KKMP radio press briefing yesterday, Torres said the House has the numbers to impeach him, but that he is sure that the Senate will be fair and is confident that the impeachment proceedings will not go further before the Senate.

Benigno R. Fitial was the first governor to be impeached by the House when 16 representatives voted for his impeachment in 2013. He, however, resigned before the Senate could start the trial.

In Torres' case, it was House Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee chair Rep. Celina R. Babauta (R-Saipan) who introduced Monday House Resolution 22-14 impeaching Torres for alleged commission of felonies, corruption, and ne-

glect of duty in violation of Article 3, Section 19 of the CNMI Constitution.

As of yesterday afternoon, 13 representatives have already signed the impeachment resolution, including Babauta. Rep. Sheila J. Babauta (D-Saipan), who is off-island, is expected to sign it.

Those who signed the resolution are eight Democrats—Babauta, Sablan, Edwin K. Propst, Vicente C. Camacho, Richard T. Lizama, Denita K. Yangetmai, Magofna, and Staffler. Three Republicans signed the resolution: Attao, and Reps. Ralph N. Yumul and John Paul Sablan.

Two independents—Rep. Joel C. Camacho and Manglona—also signed the resolution.

As of yesterday afternoon, House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez and Joseph A. Flores, both independents, have not signed the resolution yet.

The four others who have not signed the resolution are Republican Reps. Roy A. Ada, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Angel A. Demapan, and Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero.

Torres will be impeached if at least 14 House representatives vote to adopt the resolution. Once the governor is impeached by the House, the nine-seat Senate will then hold a trial. If six senators vote for his conviction, Torres will be removed from office.

Six senators are Republicans. They are Senate President Jude U. Hofsneider, vice president Justo S. Quitugua, Sens. Vinnie Vinson F. Sablan, Victor B. Hocog, Karl R. King-Nabors, and Francisco Q. Cruz.

Sen. Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero is a Democrat, while Sens. Teresita A. Santos and Paul A. Manglona are independents.

In his letter to Villagomez yesterday, Birnbrich said the public should have confidence that the members of the committee, who are considering the removal of a governor are not be motivated by prejudice, bias, or partisan considerations.

In the footnote of his letter, Birnbrich said it would also be unseemly for the committee to have any members who are themselves accused of criminal activities.

Given the significance of the potential removal of a sitting governor, Birnbrich said such a committee and the procedures by which it operates should be above reproach.

As to the membership of the committee, Birnbrich said they are requesting that they be evenly divided among those who caucus with Republicans and with the Democrats.

With respect to the procedures, he said they request that the House adopt explicit rules that govern the process by which the committee will operate, including the admission of evidence, taking of testimony, and due process afforded the governor.

Birnbrich said absent rules, the special committee will be making ad hoc decisions on these critical matters, which would undermine the public's confidence in its legitimacy.

He said in other jurisdictions, House committees evaluating the impeachment of governors have operated according to such rules.

He said an impeachment process is a grave undertaking with implications for the entire government of the CNMI and for the future of the Commonwealth.

"We hope to work cooperatively with you to ensure the process has the requisite reliability and dignity," Birnbrich told the speaker.

cording to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

According to CPA chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds, the CPA board recently consulted with the Tinian leadership to get their input on how CPA should proceed with the use of the divert lease proceeds apportioned to the airport. The total amount for the divert lease is approximately \$21.9 million. Of that amount, \$21 million is apportioned to the airport and \$900,000 is apportioned to the seaport.

King-Hinds explained that it has long been the dream to build an international airport on Tinian with infrastructure that can welcome direct flights. However, she said the reality is that it just might not be possible right now because there aren't enough rooms for accommodation due to military activities on the island.

"\$21 million is a lot of money but not enough money to build the dream airport that people were wishing for during the [Tinian] Dynasty [Hotel & Casino] days. The reality is, it doesn't make sense to court direct international flights when we barely have enough hotel rooms to accommodate visitors with all these military construction activities," she said.

King-Hinds explained that because of this, CPA, in collaboration

with the Tinian leadership, must look at adjusting its previous plans and downscale considerably and make investments that are aligned with the island's reality.

"The reality is, while these military activities are welcomed and can be beneficial economically, it's not conducive to growing our local tourism industry. So, we are now looking at the master plan to make adjustments that would still allow for direct flights but not in the way people dreamed about 20 years ago," King-Hinds said.

"Obviously, this is not a decision that CPA will make alone and that's why we consulted with the Tinian leadership who represent the people to get their input and we all agree that this is a more realistic plan and best use of the \$21 million," she added.

Meanwhile, CPA, in consultation with the Tinian leadership, is currently using the \$900,000 apportioned to the seaport to make improvements to the Tinian Marina, which includes the construction of bathrooms, paved parking lot, boat wash down, concrete pavilions, and a mural at the Tinian Marina.

"This area is frequently used by the community and so we see this as not only an investment in enhancing the location for commercial and tourism purposes; but also something that the community can directly benefit from and enjoy," King-Hinds said.

CNMI reports seventh and eighth COVID-19-related death

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. have confirmed the CNMI's seventh and eighth COVID-19-related death. Both patients passed this month: one patient was unvaccinated, and the other was vaccinated.

The patients tested positive for COVID-19 in December, were identified at CHCC, and isolated.

"The passing of members of Tinian municipal council thanks Torres, CPA

The 18th Tinian Municipal Council has thanked Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and the Commonwealth Ports Authority for their immediate response to the threat of COVID-19 outbreak on Tinian and providing for emergency transportation necessary to evacuate patients needing urgent care amid the suspension of interisland flight services.

The municipal council expressed its gratitude with the passage of two resolutions during a regular session last Dec. 16.

Municipal Council chair Joseph E. Santos, who is also a member of the Tinian COVID-19 Task Force, said that it was a great challenge for the local task force and the team

our community is never easy to share, and it is a reminder for us to stay vigilant and vaccinated against this virus. If you're unvaccinated, please get vaccinated," said Torres.

As of Dec. 18, 2021, there have been a total of 2,422 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the CNMI.

"Our sincerest and heartfelt condolences go out to both families. It's always difficult when you lose a family member and especially right before

the holidays," said CHCC chief executive officer Esther L. Muña. "I urge the CNMI community to please continue to practice preventive measures to keep yourself and your family living COVID-19 safe. Please consider vaccinations if you are able to and get your boosters when due to have this extra layer of defense against this disease. Continue to wear your mask, wash your hands, and watch your distance. Even during the holidays, you can celebrate safely with these measures in place, like celebrating

outdoors; and if you are celebrating indoors, bring in fresh air by opening the windows and doors, if possible. We should all look for the risks of transmission and focus on removing those risks."

The CHCC highly encourages unvaccinated individuals to get vaccinated or get a booster shot against COVID-19 to help prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death. Data from small clinical trials show that vaccine effectiveness against COVID-19 infection is waning after the primary series, but protection remains high against severe disease and hospitalization. Register for CO

VID-19 vaccination at www.vaccinatecnmi.com.

If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms like coughing, fever, shortness of breath, or new loss of taste or smell, get checked by a health care provider right away, or call the CHCC Tele-Triage line (670) 233-2067 if you do not have a provider.

If you are not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and it has been five to seven days since your exposure to a person who may have COVID-19, avail of the free Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services antigen testing (Mondays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, 8am – 4pm, at Kagman, Ga

rapan, or Susupe fire stations) or the free community-based testing (register at <https://covidtesting.chcc.health>; more dates will be announced).

While you wait to get tested or get your test results, live COVID-19 safe: practice the 3 W's (wear your mask, wash your hands, watch your distance); avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces; cover coughs and sneezes; clean and disinfect high touch surfaces daily; be alert for symptoms daily; and get tested for COVID-19. View the CNMI COVID-19 guide book at www.staysafeenmi.com/livencovidsafe. (PR)

How to have a safe holiday

Christmas Day is right around the corner, and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther L. Muña says it is still possible to reduce one's COVID-19 risk in social gatherings.

Municipal Council secretary Juanita M. Mendiola, said, "I will give credit where credit is due, and in this case, there is no doubt that the governor and CPA board care for the people of Tinian as I have witnessed firsthand their deep worry and concern over the situation. I am and the people of Tinian are very thankful for their quick and lifesaving response," she said. (PR)

If possible, Muña advises holding gatherings outdoors. If this is not possible, or if a gathering needs to be indoors, she advises limiting the number of guests, opening windows to ensure proper ventilation, wearing a face covering, and rearranging furniture to ensure social distancing.

For gatherings where guests will sit down and eat together, Muña advised reducing direct, unmasked face-to-face conversations with others as much as possible. If there will be a buffet, Muña recommended having hand sanitizer and disposable gloves readily available.

Muña said the CNMI's active hospitalizations are of great concern to her and CHCC, and that the pattern being observed thus far is that COVID-19 transmission

is taking place during social gatherings and in households.

"It is very concerning for us with this high number of hospitalizations. We want everyone to please reconsider [their social gatherings]. The patterns that we're seeing with these cases [is] that it is happening in social gatherings, it is happening within the household, it is happening with loved ones," she said.

As of Dec. 19, there are 12 active hospitalizations as a result of COVID-19. By vaccination status, seven are unvaccinated and five vaccinated. Two of the 12 are on a ventilator, and four patients have already been discharged.

Muña acknowledged that

the COVID-19 pandemic has brought hardships to all and that the holiday season is a time to gather and celebrate, but again emphasized the importance of keeping you and your loved ones safe.

"We know that it's a time of celebration and it's probably something you haven't done in quite a while [and] we can be creative and we can do it safely. ...The best gift you can give to your family is their safety, health, and protection, and this is really the time to do it, especially [with] the patterns that we're seeing so we can reduce our cases, but mainly prevent hospitalizations," she said. (Joshua Santos)



TRUE HOSPITALITY FOR EVERYONE

The award winning Premium hotel brand Crowne Plaza is coming to Saipan!
Anticipated open date: March 2022

The Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan will offer a contemporary, modern premium resort experience to guests at its beachfront property in the heart of Garapan. At Crowne Plaza, we embrace the holistic needs of the modern traveler. **Flexibility, collaboration and empathy** is at the heart of everything we do. With a range of full time and part time roles available we will offer our colleagues opportunities to develop their career through our training programs and when it's time to relax, tap into our great global benefits.

We are seeking expressions of interest from confident individuals who are passionate about connecting with people – adding personal flair and charm that inspires memorable interactions with guests and colleagues.

We are recruiting with an estimated start date of **January/February 2022**:

Housekeeping Manager
Housekeeping Supervisor
Room Attendant
Housekeeping Coordinator
Laundry Attendant
Linen Room Attendant (Seamstress)
Public Area Attendant
Night Manager

Food & Beverage Supervisors
Food & Beverage Attendants
Food & Beverage Bartenders
Hotel Services Supervisors
Hotel Services Agents
Recreation Attendants (Lifeguards)
Engineering Admin Assistant
General Maintenance Workers

Bakers
Commis 1
Commis 2
Pastry Chef
Demi Chef
Steward Supervisors
Stewards
Kitchen Coordinator

Feel like the perfect fit for these roles? Let us know by 3rd January 2022 at IHG Careers: careers.ihg.com or contact Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan Human Resources department at HR.CPRSAipan@ihg.com



CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL AND RESORTS |

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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EDITORIAL

What they earned: Three Medal of Honor recipients represent the best of America

America's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are over, but the actions of many of the troops who served can continue to uplift a fractious nation. President Biden Thursday paid tribute to three such soldiers with the Medal of Honor.

In October 2005 in Samarra, Iraq, Sgt. 1st Class Alwyn Cashe was in a Bradley Fighting Vehicle that was struck by an improvised explosive device, engulfing it in flames. Despite being burned more than three-quarters of his body, despite continuing enemy fire, Cashe rescued six soldiers and an Iraqi interpreter. A month later, he would die from those burns.

A fact to take to heart: Despite the fact that 16% of the active-duty military is Black, Cashe is the first African-American recipient of the medal since 9/11, a period during which 28 servicemen have been so honored.

The second soldier paid posthumous tribute was Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Celiz. In Afghanistan's Paktia Province in July 2018, the Army Ranger, in his fifth deployment, led a small unit to clear an area of enemy forces; it ended in an onslaught of gunfire. Celiz exposed himself to the fusillade as he secured a heavy weapon system and bought his unit precious time to reach cover, enabling a wounded comrade to get to a medical evacuation helicopter. He died soon thereafter of his wounds. (Celiz happens to be the first Jewish Medal of Honor recipient since 9/11.)

One soldier was at the White House to have the medal hung around his neck. In the summer of 2013, Master Sgt. Earl Plumlee was a Green Beret serving in Afghanistan's Forward Operating Base Ghazni when it came under attack. An explosion ripped open the perimeter wall, and 10 armed insurgents wearing suicide vests rushed in. Plumlee then engaged the enemy fighters, killing multiple insurgents in an elaborate gunfight and saving many American lives.

Three humble soldiers who sacrificed for their brethren in good faith: America owes them not only thanks, but an honest attempt, even in small ways, to emulate their example.

©2021 New York Daily News



Pandemic fatigue has Americans glossing over omicron. But we can't give up

The holidays should be a time for getting together with friends and family, but instead we have a double dose of coronavirus strains—Delta and omicron. Whether we are exhausted from the pandemic or not, we still need to prevent the spread of infections. Fortunately, we know what works.

For indoor gatherings, each person should be fully vaccinated with a booster shot, or, for someone with a confirmed prior COVID infection, at least one vaccine dose. They all should have frequent rapid antigen tests for the days prior to and time of gathering. These tests screen for whether a person is infectious, which is far more important than whether they have been infected but not capable of transmitting the virus. Ideally, all gatherings would be outdoors, but if that's not possible, maximizing ventilation with windows open or HEPA air filtration with CO2 monitoring provides good air quality.

Unfortunately, most people won't be willing or able to take these precautions for various reasons.

Rapid antigen tests are not widely available unless you happen to live in Colorado, where they are being distributed for free. The United States has never gotten testing on the right track since the first day of the pandemic, and that is still the case.

In Europe, more than 60 rapid tests are approved by the regulatory authorities. They are freely available in many countries or for nominal cost from vending machines or pharmacies. In the U.S., the Food and Drug Administration has been very slow to provide clearance for the tests, with only a handful on the market (Binax is the most common). But these tests remain expensive at around \$8 each, which makes frequent or daily testing much too costly for most people.

While the rapid tests are a limiting factor, using medical grade masks shouldn't be. Both KN95 or N95 masks are widely available, inexpensive, and well worth the added layer of protection against delta or omicron, both of which are far more contagious than earlier variants. Yes, it's unrealistic for people at holiday gatherings to be wearing KN95 masks, especially sharing a meal, but wearing them is still worthwhile when possible.

The greater danger is the false sense of security and complacency among the public after living with the pandemic for nearly two years. Many people, after reading early reports suggesting omicron might be a milder form of the virus, are asking "Why should I worry?"

First, we don't have any evidence that omicron is milder than delta. We know it has induced less severe illness, fewer hospitalizations and deaths. But the primary explanation for that is not the virus, it is our immunity built up from either prior infections, vaccinations, or both.

Second, you should worry because an infection can spread

By ERIC J. TOPOL
Los Angeles Times

Eric J. Topol is a professor of molecular medicine at Scripps Research and author of the newsletter Ground Truths.



to infections in others, so vulnerable people such as the aged or immunocompromised can get hit. The person infected can still get quite ill with high fevers, loss of smell and taste, and other symptoms, even if there is no pneumonia or other organ injury besides the lungs. Importantly, there is the concern about long COVID, which can be an enduring, disabling complex of symptoms, including profound fatigue, breathlessness, brain fog, and other features even in people with mild infections. We don't know yet how common long COVID will be for omicron infections and whether vaccinations protect from this condition.

Meanwhile, the U.S. is in the midst of a second surge of delta with over 120,000 new confirmed cases a day, more than 1,200 deaths a day, and currently with more than 66,000 patients in the hospital. Omicron is just getting started, still in single digit percentages, but will double as the cause of infections every 2-3 days. In a matter of weeks, omicron is certain to become the dominant strain throughout the country.

With omicron displacing delta, we will likely see more than a million new cases a day in the United States, as projected from new records seen in Southern Africa, Britain, Denmark, Norway and other countries that have already seen a rise in omicron.

Even if omicron yields an overall milder picture of sickness than earlier variants, the enormous number of people infected means we will see the vulnerable—the aged, the immunocompromised, the unvaccinated, and those who have been vaccinated but whose immunity has waned—needing hospitalization and those numbers will likely be substantial. That means our medical providers and resources will likely be overrun again.

That's why we need to plan for the worst, hope for the best. Soon we will have potent drugs to help treat infections in their early days and prevent the progression of illness, and on the horizon are prospects for a universal vaccine against all coronaviruses and protection against future variants.

But for now, we should use every tool at our disposal to limit the spread of the virus strains. Only in that way will we make progress in transitioning COVID-19 to an endemic disease from the seemingly endless pandemic we face now.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Statement on introduction of articles of impeachment and formation of a special committee on impeachment

Editor's Note: Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres issued the following statement in response to the introduction of the articles of impeachment and the plans for creation of a special committee on impeachment.

I have done nothing wrong.

If the Democrat-led Legislature insists on proceeding with their investigation, I request that the House of Representative speaker: 1) appoint members who are respectable statesmen and stateswomen of the House who are capable and committed to discharging their duties in a fair, balanced, and respectful manner so as to arrive at a truth supported by facts; and, 2) who are without pending or past ethics complaints, legal suit(s) or record of violation of law(s).

A peacetime war to save democracy

For just a couple of hours Thursday afternoon, at least some of your elected and appointed officials in nation's capital were distracted from their daily descent into the mire of today's politics of hate.

In the White House's stately East Room, three Army families sat with dozens of dignitaries as President Joe Biden awarded our nation's Medal of Honor to three courageous soldiers who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan, two of whom died saving their fellow soldiers.

And those senators and representatives who cared enough to watch were reminded of sacrifices the best and bravest of Americans have been making in wars that were being fought in the name of our cherished democracy.

One wonders how many of those elected officials who paused to watch (and issued glib press releases to honor) realized that ever since the 2020 election, they have been aiding and abetting their cravenly unpatriotic Grand Old Party pals who are shamefully willing to destroy that same democracy. And they know they have been protecting some of their colleagues who plotted with the Jan. 6 rioters who captured the Capitol. Some helped actively; the rest, with their silence. Just so one defeated politician can avoid being labeled by history as the loser.

Yet that's what Donald Trump absolutely was. As we were once warned by Washington's most famous and powerful Republican. But you understandably may have forgotten just how vehement and spot-on his analysis once was. Because after he spoke, he pulled back into his shell and kept silent ever since.

"January 6 was a disgrace," Senate's Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said in a scathing Senate speech way back on Feb. 13. "American citizens attacked their own government. ... Fellow Americans beat and bloodied our own police. They stormed the Senate floor. They tried to hunt down the speaker of the House.

Organizing Amazon affects us all

By SHARON GRAHAM, STUART APPELBAUM, and CHRISTY HOFFMAN
PROGRESSIVE PERSPECTIVES

Christmas trees, Hanukkah candles, New Year's countdown clocks—these are some of the ways we mark the holiday season. But Amazon workers have other, more brutal metrics this time of year. The company demands that they pick, stow, pack, ship and deliver at a faster rate and for longer hours.

The holidays, workers in Amazon warehouses tell us, is not a time of cheer, but backbreaking labour and relentless pressure. It can cost them their health and rob them of time with their families. In many ways, the "holiday crunch" is all that is wrong with the company's labor model, but amplified.

In Bessemer, Alabama, where a union drive was stymied earlier this year, workers have never stopped organizing with the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union, or RWDSU, despite the company's ongoing campaign to steamroll over their rights. Workers, for example, have stated—and the National Labor Relations Board agrees with them—that Amazon meddled in the process by illegally pressuring warehouse staff to vote against joining a union.

I just don't see how Rep. Camacho with a pending assault and battery charge and Rep. Propst with a history of alleged criminal sexual conduct complaints can legitimately interrogate me and spread misinformation about abuse and corruption—all without legal merit—when they themselves are facing charges of violence and sexual abuse, respectively.

The expensive political show put on by Democrat Celina Bautista, which appeared to be used to settle a personal political score, is a farce and gross misuse of legislative power and authority. It will go down in CNMI history as a case study on how not to conduct a fair and impartial legislative investigation.

Let's put this behind us and, rather than fight one another, work together to move our islands forward.

The Legislature should focus on policy and allow the Execu-

They built a gallows and chanted about murdering the vice president. They did this because they had been fed wild falsehoods by the most powerful man on Earth because he was angry he lost an election. Former President Trump's actions preceding the riot were a disgraceful—disgraceful—dereliction of duty....

"There is no question – none – that President Trump is practically and morally responsible for provoking the events of the day."

But, McConnell didn't vote to impeach Trump. And he single-handedly prevented the Senate from creating a bipartisan U.S. commission to probe how Trump and his GOP followers schemed to shatter our democracy by overthrowing the 2020 election. He and other Republican leaders have rewarded Trump with their silence ever since.

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy once dared to say what he actually thought. "The president bears responsibility for Wednesday's attack on Congress by mob rioters," McCarthy said days after the Jan. 6 rioters invaded his House. "He should have immediately denounced the mob when he saw what was unfolding... (and should) accept his share of responsibility." But when Trump's only response was fury, McCarthy was one of the first to catch the GOP's political laryngitis pandemic on all things Trump.

Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., is the most famous Republican who has shown the patriotic courage to combat the efforts of Trump's far right un-patriots to undermine America's democracy. (Only Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., who isn't seeking reelection, has been with her all the way.) After House Republicans booted her from her leadership job, she became vice chair of the House's January 6 Select Committee probe of all that Trump did, helped by some congressional Republicans, to overturn our 2020 election that Trump's Justice Department ruled was proper.

What pushed these workers to seek a union was the punishing pace of work they were required to maintain, which was damaging both their physical and mental health.

The stress can be particularly hard on any day, but during the holiday shopping season, it can become unbearable. We know that at least two workers from the Bessemer facility have lost their lives this year: One died on the job; the other was rushed to the hospital after collapsing at work.

And several others have died there since it opened in 2020. Ambulances are sadly a regular occurrence at the Bessemer facility, as they are at many Amazon warehouses.

With its obsession with control, speed and disregard for workers' rights, "Bezosism" is a threat to all workers—not just those who work for Amazon. Without a strong voice on the job, workers will never get a fair chance when facing a corporation that has so much influence over commerce, the future of work and our data.

The first step to overhauling the company's systemic problems is to shift more power to Amazon workers. We know that workers can be agents for change when they join together—as we saw on Black Friday when thousands of Amazon warehouse workers and allies in more than 20 countries across six continents protested and went on strike as part of a global push to

By RALPH DLG TORRES
Special to the Saipan Tribune



Ralph DLG Torres is governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

tive Branch to administer without undue interference.

The Legislature should focus on solutions and leave formal charges of criminal misconduct to law enforcement and the courts.

By MARTIN SCHRAM
Tribune News Service



Martin Schram, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive. Readers may send him email at martin.schram@gmail.com.

As Trump activists maneuver to end Cheney's political career, she crusades to save our democracy. She just read excerpts of texts that their ex-House colleague, Trump chief of staff Mark Meadows, got from House Republicans, Fox commentators and Donald Trump Jr. Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio admits he wrote the one forwarding a wrongheaded scheme to have Vice President Mike Pence refuse to accept some states' elector slates – and accept alternate slates.

"January 6th was without precedent," Cheney declared. "There has been no stronger case in our nation's history for a congressional investigation into the actions of a former president.... And we will get to the objective truth to ensure that January 6th never happens again."

As those incomparably heroic soldiers were so movingly honored in the East Room Thursday, I found myself thinking that our civilian world is not without its own heroes whose efforts, while of course far lesser, deserve our commendation and gratitude.

Now more than ever, in a Hollywood version of our Washington world, Liz Cheney deserves to somehow become the new, fitting finale for a cinematically updated edition of JFK's Pulitzer-winning book, "Profiles in Courage." It is a patriotic work in progress.

Make Amazon Pay. In Italy, drivers and couriers made significant improvements in working conditions and pay through their labor actions.

If Amazon workers want a better deal next holiday season, they need a union. And Amazon should stop standing in their way.

Amazon workers toil in different countries, with different cultures and different labour regulations. But the problems nearly every worker faces are the same: increasing concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a corporation that consistently mistreats and devalues its workforce.

The bottom line is that Amazon takes far too much for itself, while leaving workers and society with too little.

And that is why we are coming together, to push for change, to demand that workers are allowed to create a union without Amazon's relentless union-busting and interference. We will reign in the power of Amazon and strengthen labor rights around the world.

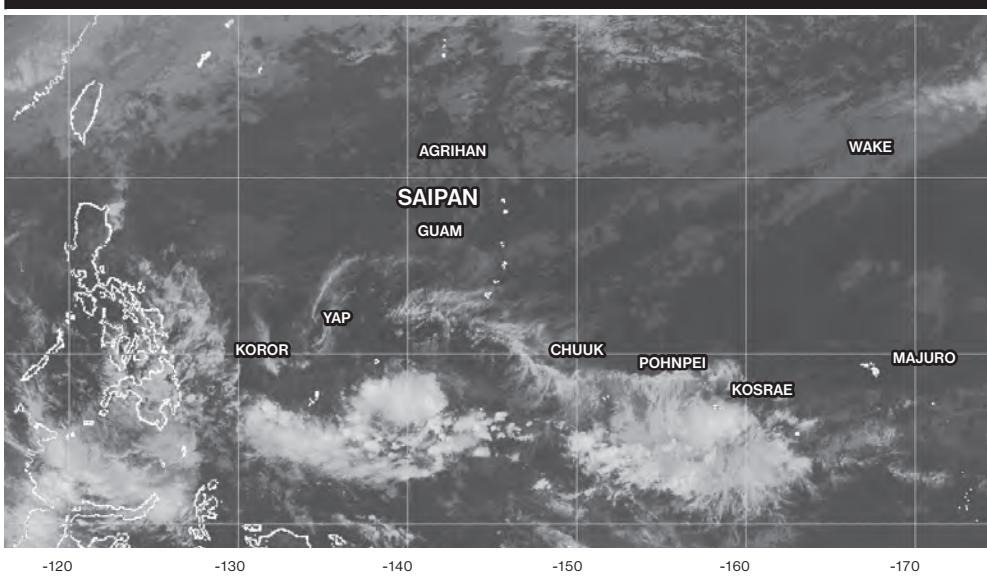
Sharon Graham is the general secretary of Unite the Union; Stuart Appelbaum is president of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union; and Christy Hoffman is the general secretary of the UNI Global Union. This column was produced for The Progressive magazine and distributed by Tribune News Service.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. east winds 10 to 15 mph, becoming light after sunset.	Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy. Scattered showers.	Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.
86°	75°	87°	76°	85°
75°	85°	75°	85°	75°
85°	75°	85°	75°	85°
75°	85°	75°	85°	75°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:35 AM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Doppler radar imagery shows a smattering of light showers just west of the coastal waters, with just isolated brief light showers crossing the Marianas. The satellite imagery does show mostly cloudy skies, but much of this is centered above 30,000 feet, and is associated with some moisture and lift in the upper levels of the atmosphere. The Ipan buoy shows seas hovering just above 5 feet, with a water temperature of 84 degrees.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors



CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 InfoLine at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp/and, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 sec-

Source: Office of the Governor

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website: www.saipantribune.com.

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MICRONESIA		
Guam and Rota	Showers	86° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	83° / 77°
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:38 AM	5:52 PM
Thursday	6:39 AM	5:52 PM
Friday	6:39 AM	5:53 PM
Saturday	6:40 AM	5:53 PM
Sunday	6:40 AM	5:54 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	8:57 AM	8:25 PM
Thursday	-	9:42 AM	9:18 PM
Friday	-	10:25 AM	10:10 PM
Saturday	-	11:05 AM	11:02 PM
Sunday	-	11:44 AM	11:53 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE		
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	75° / 63°
Beijing	Sunny	39° / 19°
Hong Kong	Sunny	66° / 52°
Honolulu	Showers	81° / 70°
London	Cloudy	46° / 37°
Los Angeles	Sunny	73° / 50°
Manila	Rain	84° / 75°
Melbourne	Showers	86° / 63°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	80° / 71°
New York	Showers	47° / 38°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	52° / 36°
Paris	Showers	48° / 39°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	46° / 34°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	52° / 32°
Salem	Showers	65° / 48°
San Francisco	Sunny	62° / 45°
Seoul	Sunny	28° / 14°
Tokyo	Sunny	55° / 36°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	57° / 39°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
3:25 AM	Low Tide	-0.47
10:48 AM	High Tide	1.62
4:11 PM	Low Tide	1.12
8:28 PM	High Tide	1.52

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117 7:20am 8:05am 2, 4, 6				UA116 5:30am 6:16am 2, 4, 6			
UA117 9:50am 10:35am 1, 3, 5, 7				UA174 8:00am 8:46am 1, 3, 5, 7			
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
UA183 8:00pm 9:50pm Daily				UA184 10:40pm 4:30am+1 2, 5			
				UA184 10:55pm 4:45am+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7			
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183 7:20am 9:50pm 2, 4, 6 via Guam				UA184/174 10:40pm 6:16am+1 5 via Guam			
UA117/183 9:50am 9:50pm 1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam				UA184/174 10:40pm 8:46am+1 2 via Guam			
				UA184/174 10:55pm 6:16am+1 1, 3 via Guam			
				UA184/174 10:55pm 8:46am+1 4,			

SPREADING HOLIDAY CHEER

The art of wrapping gifts

Tips from pro-wrapper Sierra Lei Kileleman Cody



Sierra Lei Kileleman Cody and Mike at Good Morning Texas mug for the camera. Cody is a professional gift wrapper who's rocking Texas now with her gift-wrapping skills.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By IVA MAURIN

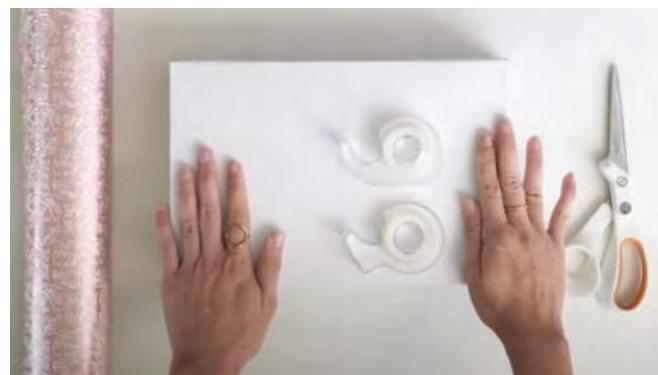
CORRESPONDENT

It's the holidays once more and you know what that means—gifts, gifts, and even more gifts—either in the form of stuff, service, words, or sweet little things that could make our loved ones' happy.

If you opted to gift things and haven't wrapped them yet, we have this little guide for you, as shared by Saipan-born and -raised Sierra Lei Kileleman Cody, a professional gift wrapper who's rocking Texas now with her gift-wrapping skills.

Cody worked over a decade at the upscale stationery boutique, Papirus—even becoming the most well-known gift wrapper in the company, with people paying her up to \$150 to wrap one gift for Christmas. Not only that, she has done radio and TV interviews, including a segment for Good Morning Texas.

Moving back to Saipan in 2019, Cody wrapped gifts for Pena House Boutique for Christmas 2020 and Valentine's 2021, eventually partnering with the boutique to create

**Supplies:**

Double stick tape, single-sided tape, scissors, wrapping paper, gift box (can be reusable)

"pre-wrapped gifts" products that people can just purchase, until she left for Dallas just last April this year.

Cody has a YouTube channel, an Instagram account, and a public Facebook group, *Wrap City Gifts*, where she freely posts tutorials and other information on gift wrapping.

"Gift giving makes people happy," Cody said. "Gift wrapping is the luxury art form of

gift giving that people want to master when it comes to giving their mothers or loved ones gifts. I am not going to charge anyone who wants to impress their mothers with a beautifully wrapped gift."

Cody also has one rule for Saipan residents: *Do not ever take flat rate boxes from the post office to use as gift boxes.*

"If you think you are doing something

harmless, you are wrong. Ask stores for their shipment boxes, buy your own gift boxes, use your old shoe boxes, but never take brand new shipment boxes from the post office," she said.

Now, let's take advantage of this quick and free tutorial from Cody and learn to wrap gifts this holiday!

See *THE ART* on Page 10

FREE SAMSUNG GALAXY BUDS2
WITH THE POWERFUL SAMSUNG NOTE20 ULTRA

SAMSUNG
Galaxy Note20 Ultra
\$399
Unlimited Data

The advertisement features a Samsung Galaxy Note20 Ultra smartphone in black, a white case for the Galaxy Buds2, and the buds themselves. The background is a light blue with Christmas decorations like a candy cane and a star. The text "FREE SAMSUNG GALAXY BUDS2 WITH THE POWERFUL SAMSUNG NOTE20 ULTRA" is prominently displayed at the top. A large price tag of "\$399" is shown with the text "Unlimited Data" below it. The Samsung logo is at the bottom left, and the text "ITEC" and "IT&E" are at the bottom right.

ite.net itecnmi itecnmi

Terms and conditions apply. Offer available 12/17/21-12/31/21. While supplies last. Free Samsung Galaxy Buds with Samsung Note20 Ultra only available with \$55 Plan, Unlimited Plan, or Unlimited Plus. 24-month term required. Advertised device pricing is based on Unlimited Plan. Subject to credit check. See ite.net for details.

EARN PACIFIC POINTS

IT&E



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4A



STEP 4B



STEP 4C

THE ART from Page 9



How to make a simple bow

- 1 Wrap the ribbon around the box to do a quick measure, including loops and tails. Snip the ribbon once you get your preferred size.
- 2 Place left strip of ribbon over the right, then over and under. Secure the bow with your finger, then make loops to form your bow.
- 3 When using a printed ribbon, twist, pull, and tug to make sure the print is showing over. Cut to your preferred length.

Aside from the tutorial, Cody also has these tips for the community:

- When Joeten Susupe has a discount off their ribbon by the yard, it's one of the cheapest prices that you will find, if not the cheapest.
- You don't need ribbon to make bows. You can make paper bows using any type of paper, plus it's a fun craft activity for children. [Check Cody's YouTube channel to learn how to make paper bows]
- Tape is tape, you don't need Scotch brand tape. Cody said she has tested all brands and types of tape on Saipan and that they're all good—except the BAZIC double-sided tape.
- You can make gift tags out of wrapping paper. If the wrapping paper is too thin for you, you can glue stick it to Xerox paper or construction paper. No one ever really needs actual gift tags.
- Don't ever shop/gift over your budget. No one ever needs to overspend for Christmas—it's not the point of the holidays. We're in a pandemic, no one should ever be ashamed to say that they can't afford gifts. That's not the point of Christmas.
- Shop online throughout the year. Victoria's Secret, Bath & Body Works and a bunch of stores run two semi-annual sales (January and June) and ship to Saipan, except products with alcohol. Macy's runs their lowest prices of the year sale in September/October and many of their products ship to Saipan. Old Navy honors their free shipping promos to Saipan ("free shipping with \$25 purchase"). If you're patient and you shop sales throughout the year online, you will save a lot of money.
- Don't overlook buying/giving Christmas cards. The simple gesture of hand writing a Christmas card goes a long way in this tech world now. And, don't just sign your name—tell your loved one why you are thankful for them.

For more of Cody's tutorials, check out Wrap City Gifts on YouTube, and @wrap_city_gifts on Instagram.

The gift that grows

Perfect presents for plant parents

By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT

Looking to give something to family or friends who love plants?

More and more of our loved ones have developed a thumb for gardening during this pandemic and what best way to show love to them than to fuel their passion and give them that one perfect gift that grows.

For Dchez Javier, owner of Kiara's Garden, gifting plants this Christmas is a way of telling someone that you care. According to her, plants not only brighten up your surroundings, but can also lift your mood and studies have shown that an environment with plants creates a feeling of well-being.

"Gardening is therapeutic and an excellent stress buster," Javier said. "It is a relaxing recreational activity that can provide great personal reward. When gardening, you make things grow. Gardening provides a sense of pride that you can grow healthy and beautiful plants."

Kiara's Garden's best sellers are

its indoor plants, orchids, bromeliads and succulents, and cacti. They also have precious plant varieties of monstera, begonia, orchids, bromeliad, philodendron, calathea, aglaonema, hoyia, peperomia, and more.

We asked members of CNMI's plant lovers community, Sprout & About, on what would be the best gift for plant parents like them—and the short answer? Know what plants they like.

According to Hanaivy Babauta, "gifting plants is difficult because to find the right plant, you really have to know what plants they already own, otherwise you might just duplicate the responsibility of caring for the same plant."

Nhorleen Bitco-Lilles additionally advised that in gifting plants, "it would help if you know what kinds of plants your friend(s) are into, plants she doesn't have yet and the ones she would like. If not sure about plants [but] pots are always a nice alternative."

What other gifts would be perfect for plant parents? Here's the basic top three:

See GROWS on Page 12

Happy Holidays

Holiday Pie
Now Available

McDonald's Gift Card
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GROWS from Page 11

1. Combo cuttings/starting plants in a propagating jar

Javier said the best plants as gifts for beginners are pothos, spider plants, snake plants, dracaena species, bromeliads and lucky bamboo [to name a few]. However, for pro gardeners, she said the best plants to give are anthuriums, orchids, succulents and cacti, calatheas, begonias, and other plants that require high maintenance.

Where to buy: Kiara's Garden | Wireless Ridge | Wasana's Garden | Saturday Street Market

**2. Pots and planters**

You got your plants now, so what's next? Pots, of course. Pots are perfect because plants grow, so you can always get a bigger pot as a gift. Your plant loving family or friend most likely would also have lots of plants to propagate so pots can and will always be useful. Also, be mindful to get ones with good drainage!

Where to buy: Sprout & About members swear by pots bought from Wasana's Garden, Pop Up, and Lucky De Market.

**3. Garden tools and a watering can**

The basics would be hand tools, which would include a planting and a digging trowel, and a cultivator hand rake. The gardening trowels are very useful when digging small holes for planting smaller plants, and also for digging up weeds. Then watering can, of course, to water the plants! If you are feeling extra generous, it would be best to also throw in a pair of gardening gloves, fertilizer, plant markers, some plant swags, and well, even a bag or two of soil.

Where to buy: Ace Hardware



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Saipan

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Special rates valid for stay until 1/2/2022 | CNMI & Guam Local resident rates—valid local ID required
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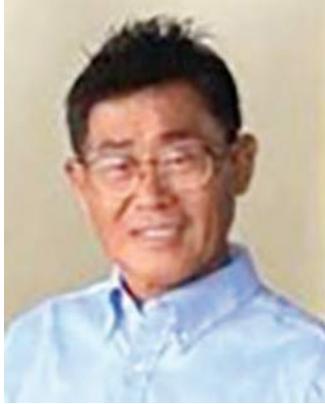
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All I want for Christmas is...

By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT



“As difficult as this time in everyone's life may be...I wish our people will become stronger with patience and hope, and focus on our strengths, not our weaknesses. I hope God gives us our inner strengths and fills our hearts with love and laughter. Let's look forward to happiness in 2022, Embrace safe holidays everyone.”

—Steve Jang,
Plumeria and Ete' Cafe



What does your heart want this holiday season? We ask business owners and community leaders and members for their biggest wish is, and they all chorused with better health, and more love and happiness for all. Happy holidays, everyone!



“My wish for this Christmas is for all local people and tourists to enjoy Coral Ocean Resort. Coral Ocean Resort will open this Dec. 29, and will be the first relaxing content Beach Club, with Spanish tapas cuisine and the best sushi and seafood buffet in Saipan.”

—Calvin Park,
Coral Ocean Park



“During this Christmas season, I pray for everyone's health, safety, and God's blessings. I continue to hope and pray that this pandemic will end soon and that we will be able to return to our normal life again.”

—David M. Apatang,
mayor of Saipan



“My wish for Christmas is a new boat. ...Santa, do you hear that?!”

—Kelsey McClellan,
JAMS Foundation



“I wish for the pandemic to end.”

—Jill Liske-Clark,
Tanapag

See ALL on Page 12


AQUA RESORT CLUB
Saipan

Happy NEW YEAR 2022

New Year's Eve Dinner

Costa Terrace Restaurant
Dec. 31, 2021 | 5:30pm - 9:00pm

Featuring individually served Kevin's Ribeye Steak with sides, Seafood on ice, Sushi & Sashimi, Wok Fried Blue Crab Legs, Fresh Salad Bar, Desserts, Free-Flowing Drinks and more!

ADULTS: \$52 | \$42* | CHILDREN (6-11): \$26 | \$21* | *Special Local Resident Rates - valid CNMI ID required

New Year's Day Brunch

Costa Terrace Restaurant
Jan. 1, 2022 | 10:30am - 2:00pm

Featuring Herb Crusted Roast Lamb Rack, Slowly Roasted Turkey, Homemade Smoked Ham, Herb Salt Crusted Baked Fish, Seafood on ice, Sushi & Sashimi, Desserts, Drinks and more!

New Year's Day Dinner

Costa Terrace Restaurant
Jan. 1, 2022 | 5:30pm - 9:00pm

Featuring Herb Crusted Roast Lamb Rack, Slowly Roasted Turkey, Homemade Smoked Ham, Herb Salt Crusted Baked Fish, Seafood on ice, Sushi & Sashimi, Desserts, Drinks and more!

Cheers to 2022 at Vino Bar & Lobby

Vino Bar & ARC Lobby | Dec. 31, 2022 | 9:00pm - 12:00am
Live Band Entertainment | 50% Off Beverages | Complimentary Sparkling Wine Toast at Midnight!

RESERVATIONS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED | PLEASE CALL 670-322-1234 (EXT #731) FOR RESERVATIONS & MORE INFO

ALL from Page 13

"I wish for a bicycle—I live in Marpi and see people on bicycles enjoying our beautiful outdoors every day. I want to experience that too! The feeling of determination to make it up to Suicide Cliff while surrounded by the lush greenery and fresh air would be an awesome Christmas gift. [I also wish for] independence for the Marianas—the ability to make decisions on our own and fully control our immigration, our natural resources, and all things that impact our economy and quality of life. I have faith in our ability to govern ourselves."

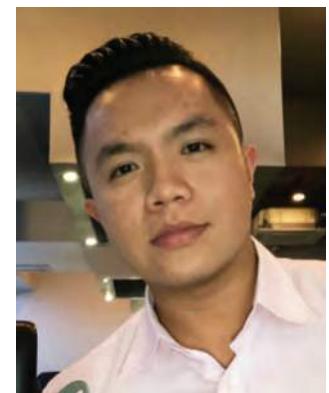
"I wish for all parties who create large emissions to take responsibility for their impact on Mother Earth and begin the healing process. I wish for every person in the Marianas to look within, do the work required to heal and grow, find work they love, and create meaningful, lasting relationships; [and] I wish for my parents, Diego and Dolorina Babauta, to travel the world and live life to the fullest!"

—Rep. Sheila Babauta



"This Christmas, I'm wishing for a more prosperous 2022 and a CNMI that can return to its roots as a community that embraces *inafa'maolek*, *tipiyeew*, and *kapwa*. The last several years have been hard due to the typhoons and the global pandemic, and it has placed an unfortunate physical and mental strain on our community. My wish is for my family and friends to be safe and healthy, while also wishing for our community to come back together as one Marianas."

—Kevin Bautista, press secretary



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"Christmas has always been special for me. It fills me with hope for the future when I see how much people can care for each other, even for strangers. My greatest Christmas wish is for all of my family to be happy, healthy, and safe no matter where they are. As a Saipan business owner, I wish for a safe return of our main resource, tourism. Merry Christmas!"

—Rhea McDoulett, Green Flash Drive



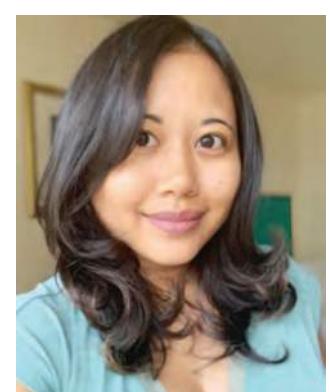
"I wish for everyone's happiness and well-being during this Christmas season and I hope to have a safe delivery next year!"

—Youki Kishimoto,
Student Exchange
Program



"Good health for everyone. We wish you a Merry Christmas! May [the holidays bring] joy to your heart and happiness to your home."

—Rep. Richard
Lizama



"My biggest wish this Christmas would be for our loved ones near and far to find comfort in their homes, their health (both physical and mental), and their hearts during this pandemic. Our community has dealt with so much these last few years with Soudelor, Mangkhut, Yutu, and the ongoing pandemic that I hope we can all just take a deep breath and find that hint of joy and relaxation before the new year."

"Although I wish my entire family were home this Christmas, I am hopeful that time will come soon but regardless, I am blessed to have loved ones to spend the holidays with right here at home. Lastly, I want to wish my students and colleagues at the Northern Marianas College, as well as, our hard-working team at SHEFA a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!"

—Kaelani Demapan, Northern Marianas College

Easy-to-make holiday dishes with Chef John

By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT

If there is one delicious thing that brings everyone together during the holidays, it's food. Christmas is a time for cooking and sharing meals with our families and friends, exchanging stories and laughter gathered around the dining table at home [or at a picnic table in one of the island's *palapala*].

Christmas is about food too. After all, food, they say, is the quickest way to someone's heart. This holiday, *Saipan Tribune* sat down with John Imperial, head chef of Plumeria Steakhouse, to talk about the importance of gathering for Christmas, and of course, to give a couple of easy-to-make delicious holiday dishes that we can try to replicate and serve in our homes.

Chef John has been in the CNMI for decades, 29 years of which he spent working in the kitchen, and learning the art and joy of cooking from his many mentor chefs that helped him through the years. For Chef John, the secret to great delicious food is "cooking from the heart" and in "serving food with love."

"Christmas is about loving, giving and forgiving, and sharing," Chef John said. "Sharing blessings, no matter how small, and gathering as a family is a Christmas tradition that is proof that your family is strong. There, you can see the love of a child for the parent, and the love of a parent for the child. That love and respect, to me, is the meaning of Christmas."

Chef John also stressed the importance of prayers and humility, and how treating others kindly goes a long way. This Christmas, his only wish is for his family to be well and healthy.

Ready to express love to your family too? Let's try two of Chef John's recipes:



Chef John Imperial shares two quick and easy-to-make recipes, perfect for sharing with families and friends this holiday season

Holiday Ham

- ham
- honey
- lemon
- apple
- orange
- rosemary
- pineapple juice
- brown sugar

Step 1. Marinade overnight then boil ham in mixture of lemon, orange, pineapple juice, honey, apple, rosemary, and brown sugar. Make sure to prick the ham while boiling to get the flavor in.

Step 2. Bake ham the next morning for 35 to 40 minutes, in 375 degrees temperature.

Step 3. Remove ham from oven. Pour sauce on ham and top with pineapple slices. Ready to serve!

See CHEF JOHN on Page 16

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Top 10 popular liquors during X'mas

By GABRIELA MIRANDA
USA TODAY

As Christmas draws closer, you may be stocking up on your favorite liquors for holiday cocktails.

Alexis Doctolero, vice president of Liquor.com, said her team has noticed an uptick in sales and trends around Christmas cocktails, like the Hot Toddy and Mulled Wine. The main ingredient for most of these drinks? Popular liquors such as Glenfiddich's malt scotches and Don Julio tequila.

"People tend to fall back on nostalgia and what feels more like home during the holidays, so we often see the same trends and interest in liquors during this season," Doctolero said.

Andrew DeMount, spokesperson for Altria Group, a Virginia-

based liquor company, echoed Doctolero in that Christmas liquor favorites tend to stay the same each year. Adults lean toward warm or hot-tempered cocktails and spiced rums or malt scotches.

Based on predictions and current liquors trends, here are the top 10 brands to grab before they sell out at your local liquor store.

1. Wild Turkey 101
2. Captain Morgan Black Spiced Rum
3. Bacardi Silver
4. Cruzan Aged Dark Rum
5. Baileys Irish Cream
6. Hennessy Black
7. The Singleton Malt Scotch Whiskey
8. El Jimador Silver
9. Grand Marnier Cordon Rouge Orange Liqueur
10. Don Q Rum Reserva 7

CHEF JOHN from Page 15

Seafood Pasta

- lobster
- crab
- pasta [preferably fettuccine]
- garlic
- onion
- mushroom
- fresh tomato [4 pieces]
- red sauce [marinara]
- whipped cream
- fresh basil
- fresh oregano
- salt and pepper
- butter

Step 1. Sauté lobster and crab

in garlic, onion, mushroom, and fresh tomatoes.

Step 2. Pour in whipped cream and red sauce. Wait to boil.

Step 3. Cook pasta according to package directions, then add to sautéed mixture.

Step 4. Add salt and pepper to taste, also chopped fresh basil and oregano.

Step 5. Add butter. Ready to serve!

To taste more of Chef John Imperial's cooking, visit Plumeria Steakhouse along Beach Road in Garapan, next to Ete' Cafe.

TOP SHELF
WINE & SPIRITS

FINE WINE & SPIRITS

Holiday Sale!

BY THE BOTTLE OR BY THE CASE.

MIDDLE ROAD, GUALO RAI (ACROSS J'S RESTAURANT) | OPEN THRU FRIDAY UNTIL 7PM. CALL (670) 233-6181



Enjoy all the traditional holiday displays at the Christmas village in Susupe.



Have a photo opportunity with Santa Claus at the Christmas in Paradise display on Capital Hill.



The Christmas display on the grounds of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs on Capital Hill features the national flower of the CNMI, the plumeria.

Unlike last year, when there were still a lot of uncertainties about the pandemic, Christmas is shiny and bright in the CNMI this year, with several Christmas light shows and displays around Saipan. The pretty and mesmerizing lights are drawing family and friends together for photographs and keepsakes of future fond memories. Every Christmas light display from Susupe to Capital Hill feature different themes, so every stop is different from the last.

This year, government agencies, business establishments and even residents all made an effort to share the joy with colored lights on gigantic cutouts and wire meshes that depict Christmas trees, snowmen, candy sticks, and Santa Clause on a sleigh, as if saying Christmas is here and this wonderful time of the year will happen no matter what.

A great way to have great fun without leaving the island is to have an early dinner and then set off to follow the lights around Saipan from 6:30pm onwards.

Start at the center of Saipan, specifically Susupe, where the annual Christmas Village can be found at the lawn of the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center. The Christmas Village is a project of the First Lady Diann Torres Foundation and has been going on for five years now. In a recent message to the community, Torres said that growing up and seeing Christmas displays would lift up her spirit. "For the past five years, the annual Christmas Village is a way our family can give our people the chance to be merry and bright, uplift their spirits, find peace and comfort, and put a smile on their faces. It is especially important during this holiday season as we continue to battle the pandemic," she said.

Next, drive north on Beach Road and make a stop at the San Jose and Atkins Kroll intersection where Christmas lights are lit under the flag poles that bear the countries the CNMI has close ties with. Find the arch and have a photo taken there. You will also see a memorial that honors the lives of soldiers and civilians that devoted their lives to serving their country during World War II. Atkin Krolls itself has huge sign that says "Happy Holidays" in red lights to add cheer in that area.

Next up: The Christmas light displays in Garapan, where you can indulge yourself with more displays. The Garapan Fishing Base has an array of Christmas displays on the pathway as high as the acacia and ironwood trees that stand

there. Look across and see the Christmas crèche that's lit with gold lights at the entrance of the Gualo Rai Church.

Head on to the grounds of the CNMI Museum of History and Culture and en-

and Kiara's Garden in Koberville, made sure she participated in this activity and got one booth for each of her business.

"Daycare centers volunteered to decorate the booths of the museum. This

demic has hit us hard, it doesn't mean we should give up in celebrating this season and safety rules should still be considered for the good of everyone," she said.

Next stop is the TSL Foundation Christ-



Maricel Ajacoscos with her family enjoy the Christmas in Paradise display on Capital Hill.



Walk or drive through the Christmas display at the Garapan Fishing Base along Beach Road.



The CNMI Museum of History and Culture invited Daycare Centers to showcase Christmas displays for everyone to enjoy this year.



Loving Hands Kindergarten is one of the participating Christmas booths at the CNMI Museum of History and Culture grounds in Garapan.



The annual Tan Siu Lin Foundation Christmas display is always a crowd draw for both residents and tourists.



The Board of Education features a Public System School bus in its Christmas display this year.



Wander through history at the Christmas Light display at the San Jose intersection.



◀ The traditional latte stone is all lit up at the Christmas in Paradise display on Capital Hill.

joy a variety of colorful Christmas booths prepared by different daycare centers on Saipan and are meant to "wow" both young and old. Dhez Javier, the owner of Loving Hands Kindergarten in San Antonio

simple effort intends to share this tradition with the community. We hope that this will bring joy to all, most especially the children. ...Christmas is a very special time of the year. Although the pan-

mas display at the TSL Center that never fails to share the Christmas cheer every year with their colorful lights display of reindeers and Christmas trees with matching Christmas carols to boot. The Christ-



Hyatt Regency Saipan's 20-foot Christmas tree is once again on display, commemorating Christmas and the hotel's 41st anniversary on Saipan.

mas lights are not only on the grounds but also festoon the building itself.

Head on to Micro Beach Road and turn left to Hyatt Regency Saipan to see their magnificent 20-foot Christmas tree. Hyatt Regency general manager Nick Nishikawa said they will never get tired putting up this giant tree every year. "We always love to see the people with smiling faces, enjoying and gathering around the tree to have their photo taken. ...Hyatt is here for the community through all the seasons of every year."

After Garapan, start the ascent to Capital Hill. Drop by the office of the Department of Cultural and Community Affairs to see the display outside their office that showcases a lighted plumeria tree, candy sticks standing on the ground and Santa Claus waving.

Across the street is the Board of Education office where a cutout of a CNMI Public School System Polar Express bus is on display. Children will have a fun time jumping into the bus and sticking out their heads out the window for a photo opportunity. The delightful IT&E Christmas pergola is also on display beside the bus.

Final stop for the night would be to the enormous lights display at the lawn of the Juan Atalig Sablan Memorial Building where a tall latte stone stands, covered with a thousand lights, symbolizing Chamorro strength and integrity.

Maricel Ajacoscos brought her family to the site to unwind and enjoy the display. "Christmas is a good reminder to be thankful that we are healthy, blessed, and to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ," she said.

The lights display also features other Christmas decorations where you can have a picture taken with a Santa Claus standee in an arch of white lights, have a seat on Surf Club's giant Adirondack chair, snowmen made of car tires, be in the scene with Santa Claus with his reindeers and enjoy the Christmas house that honor the men and women of the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

As you drive to these places, be on the lookout for houses where owners made an effort to decorate and spread the Christmas cheer.

You can direct your own course in visiting the Christmas light displays on island and be sure that you also practice the 3 W's and be grateful that, despite of the pandemic, we are still able to these things. The best part about the Christmas light displays? They are all for free!

Good Housekeeping

The wonder of a world illuminated for the *holidays*

In the darkest days of the year, in a very dark time, there is a longing for illumination.

And so, all around the world, the holiday lights go on—some of them humble, some of them spectacular, all of them a welcome respite from the dark.

They make the streets an interactive experience. There are tunnels of light—to walk through, as pedestrians do in Tokyo, at the zoo in Johannesburg, South Africa, and at the Holiday Road light

show in Calabasas, California; to drive through, at a mall in Panay, the Philippines, where visitors remained in their cars to curb the spread of COVID-19.

There are real trees and manmade trees and ginormous trees, like the light sculpture in Vigo, Spain, said to be the biggest tree in the world, so big that adults and children stroll inside. Vigo goes all out for Christmas, stringing 11 million LED lights on more than 350 streets.

Some displays are municipal, like the silvery strings of light that adorn the

lampposts of Moscow. Some are commercial, like the lights that wrap an electronics store in Syntagma Square in Athens, turning it into a massive giftbox. And some are private, like the over-the-top trimmings of homes in the Brooklyn, New York, neighborhood of Dyker Heights.

All are wonderful, in the most literal meaning of the word.

Is it possible that as the world struggles through its second Christmas season beset by disease, we need the lights to be brighter than ever? And so we spread them above like a celestial canopy in places from Barcelona, Spain, to the Old City of Damascus, Syria?

Is this how we rage against the dying of the light? (AP)



Life & Style

Chris Noth out at 'The Equalizer' amid sex assault claims

LOS ANGELES (AP)—

Chris Noth will no longer be part of the CBS series "The Equalizer" in the wake of sexual assault allegations against the actor.

Universal Television and CBS made a joint announcement Monday that Noth would no longer be part of filming "effective immediately."

Noth has played a former CIA director on "The Equalizer," which stars Queen Latifah. Noth will appear in at least one upcoming episode.

Noth's representatives had no immediate comment on

"The Equalizer" decision.

Two women accused Noth of sexual assault in a story reported last week by The Hollywood Reporter. Noth vehemently denied the allegations, which date back to 2004 and 2015.

"The accusations against me made by individuals I met years, even decades, ago are categorically false. These stories could've been from 30 years ago or 30 days ago—no always

means no—that is a line I did not cross," Noth said in a statement to the Reporter.

One of the women who accused Noth of assaulting her said his reprisal of his Mr. Big character on the "Sex and the City" sequel

"And Just Like That..." prompted her to speak out about the actor.

Noth's demise in the first episode of the show led to widespread attention.



Noth

'Spider-Man' swings even higher at North American box office

"Spider-Man: No Way Home" now holds the title for the second-biggest opening weekend ever, behind only "Avengers: Endgame."

Weekend grosses for the third Tom Holland Spider-Man came in even higher than expected, netting out with \$260 million from ticket sales in North America, Sony

Pictures said Monday. It's also the best opening weekend ever for Spider-Man films, Sony Pictures and the month of December.

While the extra push Sunday put "No Way Home," ahead of "Avengers: Infinity War," which opened to \$257.7 million in April 2018, it's still a ways be-

hind "Avengers: Endgame," which debuted to \$357.1 million in April 2019.

The stellar opening was a much-needed win for the theatrical exhibition business, which has struggled during the pandemic. Until "Spider-Man" came along, no film in the pandemic era had opened over \$100 million. (AP)

Queen Elizabeth II to skip Christmas trip amid omicron surge

LONDON (AP)—Queen Elizabeth II has decided not to spend Christmas at the royal Sandringham estate in eastern England amid concerns about the fast-spreading omicron variant.



Queen Elizabeth II

The palace said Monday that the 95-year-old queen will spend the holidays at Windsor Castle, west of London, where she has stayed for most of the pandemic.

Other members of the royal

family are expected to visit over the Christmas period, with precautions taken against spreading the virus.

Coronavirus infections are surging in Britain—up 60% in a week—as omicron replaced delta as the dominant variant, and Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said more new restrictions may have to be introduced to slow its spread. His health minister has refused to rule out im-

posing new measures before Christmas.

For years, members of Britain's extended royal family have spent the holidays at Sandringham, where crowds gather to watch them attend the local church on Christmas Day.

The queen has cut down on travel and work since spending a night in the hospital in October and being told to rest by her doctors. She has since undertaken light duties including virtual audiences with diplomats and weekly conversations with the prime minister.

Late mother's surprising lifestyle comes to light

DEAR ABBY: I was never close to my mother-in-law, "Agnes." She always came across as very religious and morally upright. She recently died of dementia. It came on so fast that there were things Agnes needed to take care of but was unable to. My husband was executor of her estate, so we had to go through all of her things and have them appraised after she passed.

One afternoon, my husband discovered a small binder tucked in the back of his mother's lingerie drawer. He looked through it and to say he was "shaken" would be an understatement. He let me read it. Apparently, his parents enjoyed wife-swapping, and Agnes took notes detailing her activities. My husband hasn't mentioned it since, and has left it to me to deal with. I have no idea what to do with it, but we certainly won't share it with his deeply religious brother or our son, who thought the world of the only grandmother he'd known.

I hesitate to destroy her property, but I don't feel it'll benefit anyone to keep it. There is no one I can discuss this with, and it's not a subject my husband wants to talk about. Your thoughts, please.

EMBARRASSED IN OREGON

DEAR EMBARRASSED: I agree that it would be of no benefit to your brother-in-law or your son to learn their re-

spected parents/grandparents were swingers -- including the intimate details of the encounters. I'm voting for keeping the past buried along with Agnes.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My adult son "Josh" has moved into the home I share with my significant other, "Tom." Josh is 30, and Tom is in his 60s. Josh has difficulty holding jobs and leaves in fits of anger if someone upsets him at work. This has put me in the middle. When he and Tom get angry at each other, they begin shouting.

I own the home we live in, so I could ask both to move out. I would also like to help my son find a job and housing so I can stop worrying about him being on his own with no place left to go. Josh is married. His wife lives with her parents nearby. Josh can't stay there because he made hurtful comments to his mother.

I just want us all to get along. During their last fight, I threatened to run away and not tell Tom or Josh where I was. I'm on eggshells every day and don't know what to do. Tom is on disability, and I'm still working. I am so frustrated I could scream. Can you help me?

FAMILY PEACEMAKER

DEAR PEACEMAKER: I'll try, but it will involve you

US-born China pop star Wang Leehom apologizes in scandal

BEIJING (AP)—An Asian

American who is one of the biggest pop stars in China apologized to his family and fans on Monday and said he will take a break from performing after a public dispute on social media with his ex-wife, who accused him of infidelity and hiring prostitutes.

The dayslong back-and-forth has riveted fans of Wang Leehom, who is popular across

the Chinese-speaking world and has acted in movies including "Lust, Caution" in 2007. The scandal was the top trending topic on the Chinese social media site Weibo, with many blaming and criticizing him.

He appeared to be trying to end the burgeoning public relations disaster with his apology to his parents, ex-wife and their children.

"I failed to manage my

marriage properly and caused trouble for my family. I didn't give the public the image an idol should have," he wrote. "This is all my fault."

The social media war began after Wang, in an online post last week, confirmed speculation that he and his wife had divorced. Her accusations contrasted with the wholesome image he had cultivated as a husband and father.

AP
Wang Leehom, an American songwriter and singer performs on stage during his solo concert in Nanjing in east China's Jiangsu province on May 20, 2018.



UTFO's Kangol Kid dies after battle with cancer at 55

Kangol Kid, a member of the legendary hip-hop group UTFO, has died after a battle with colon cancer. He was 55.

The family of Kangol Kid — whose real name is Shaun Shiller Fequiere — said in a statement that he died peacefully around 3 a.m. Saturday at a hospital in Manhasset, New

York. He was diagnosed with cancer in February.

Kid was known for often sporting the popular Kangol headwear and being a member of UTFO, which stands for Untouchable Force Organization. The four-member group was known for 1980s hits including "Roxanne, Rox-

anne" and "Ya Cold Wanna Be With Me."

Along with his hip-hop success, Kid became recognized for his efforts against breast cancer through the Mama Luke Foundation. Following his diagnosis, he had spoken publicly about the need for regular screening. (AP)

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



being strong enough to draw a firm line and stand behind it. Insist that your son start counseling for his anger management problems, which are at the root of his employment and marital difficulties, or he will no longer be welcome in YOUR home. Give him a deadline to start and do not waffle. If you stand your ground, you will not only change the direction of Josh's life but also may save your own romance.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

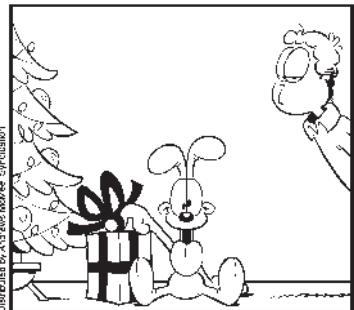
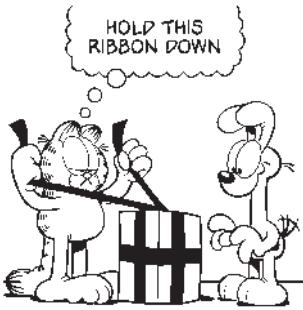


By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home



By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



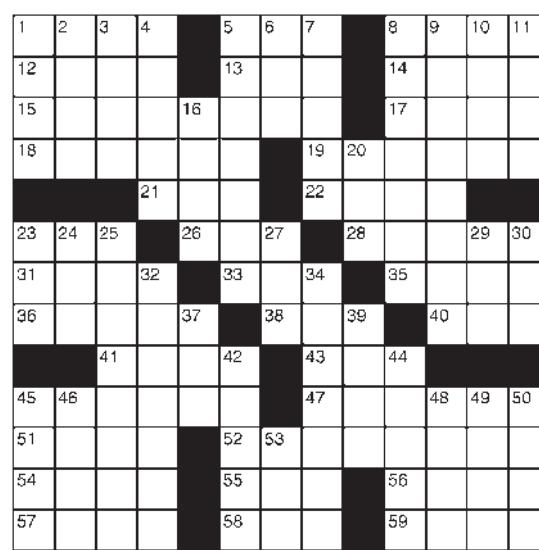
CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	38	Comics	DOWN	23	Charlotte's
1 Young		cry	1	Nobelelist	creation
fellows			40	Spigot	Walesa
5 Witch		41	Void	2	Peek
8 Eden			partner	24	Lupino of
evictee		43	Photo,	25	film
12 River of		for short	3 "Phooey!"	27	Traitor
Spain		45	4 — voice	28	Whitman
13 Barn bird		46	(softly)	of "Good	Girls"
14 Earring		47	Hamlet's	29	Secret-
site		48	friend	protecting	doc.
15 Front hall		49	6 Be-	30	Shrill
item		50	dazzle	51	bark
17 Ninny		51	7 Collect	32	River
18 Warming		52	slowly	vacations	
drink		53	8 Took in,	34	Annuls
19 Reps		54	say	37	Santa's
21 Nondairy		55	9 Winter	helper	helper
milk		56	garment	39	"Santa
variety		57	10 Slightly	Baby"	Baby"
22 Dealer's		58	eagle	singer	singer
foe		59	Lushes	Earth	Earth
23 Humorist		Clarinet	11 Citi	42	Stretchy
26 Crater		insert	16 Rip	44	fabric
part			20 Hiatus	45	More
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Indiana				48	Roundish
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concern				50	Challenge
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35 Baby's					article
father					50
36 Dance					Winter
studio					coaster
rail					53
					British
					ref. work



Yesterday's answer 12-22

**STUMPED?**

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jordin Sparks, 32; Brooke Nevin, 39; Ralph Fiennes, 59; Diane Sawyer, 76.

Happy Birthday: Work with people heading in a similar direction. Walk away from dead ends and situations that limits you. Set goals, adjust as you move forward. Consider all angle and pursue the path that favors your success. Do your own thing, and develop partnerships with promise and offer respect. Personal growth and self-improvement are featured. Your numbers are 7, 10, 22, 24, 31, 38, 45.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Enjoy the company of people who share your concerns and interests. A festive event will allow you to network with someone who can influence your career. Be entertaining, understanding and optimistic, and you'll dismiss anything that might hold you back. *********

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Insecurities and negativity will get you down. Walk away from people who are critical and divisive. Set new rules and standards that will help you head into the new year with optimism and reasonable goals. Choose intelligence over emotional disruptions. ******

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Be a help, not a hindrance. Put your energy into relationship improvements. Show how much you care by showing concern and offering to do your fair share. Follow through and live up to the promises you make. Explore your options. *********

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Don't let gift-giving disgruntle you. Put a limit on spending, and set your sights on things

you can afford. It's the thought, not the amount you spend, that will put a smile on someone's face. Tie up loose ends. *******

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Your emotions will vary due to outside influences. Maintain dignity and common sense, regardless of what others do or say. Put your heart and soul into something under your control, and ignore what is out of your jurisdiction. *******

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Enjoy the company of people who share your concerns and interests. A festive event will allow you to network with someone who can influence your career. Be entertaining, understanding and optimistic, and you'll dismiss anything that might hold you back. *********

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SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Set limits and stick to your budget. Put in place last-minute preparations that will position you for a brighter future. Follow your heart and commit to a plan. Don't put contracts on hold; make up your mind and proceed. *********

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): A lifestyle change is overdue. Consider what makes you feel good about yourself and optimistic about the direction you are heading, and put a strategy in place. It's time to make comparisons and to negotiate with someone who can contribute. *******

Birthday Baby: You are persistent, challenging and intense. You are thoughtful and resourceful.

A: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ****:** You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. *****:** Focus and you'll reach your goals. ******:** Aim high; start new projects.

*******:** Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD
IN ASTROLOGYCOURTESY 2007
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Fix up your surroundings, and enjoy the comfort of home. The changes you make should ease stress, not add to your anxiety. Stop worrying and start enjoying what life has to offer. Attitude is everything; choose to be positive and happy. *******



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Study situations thoroughly before you act. How you deal with partners, colleagues or superiors will lead to change. You want to ensure that what takes place is beneficial and positions you for a brighter future. Put your heart on the line. *******

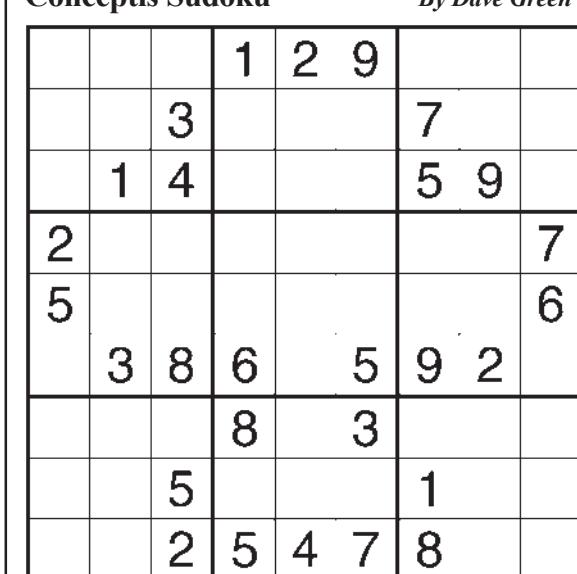


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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

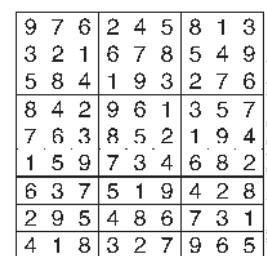
By Dave Green

Difficulty Level **★★★**

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer



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WONDERWORD

By DAVID
OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

MORNING ROUTINES

S S S W S S L E E P U Z Z L E
H S S M A G C H T E E T G A M L
O E E J O R H Y F C L E A N U
W R N N O O D O O P M I L O D
E D T H L U T H O E L L W A T E
R L I S T U R H C L H A U E H
I E F S G L F N I N S S N O C
P E P O R A A D A E U H D T S
S A L A M D R E N L R L R W W
N Y D I P A I D H I B W Y O E
I I L N M S K A E D M A L R A
O Y M R E S W E R N O L R K T
N I I N A G K E U Y I K G O H
P A I N T E A I N P R A Y O E
H Y D R A T E S N A C K S B R

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12/22

Agenda, Book, Brush, Clean, Coffee, Dance, Diary, Draw, Dress, Early, Email, Family, Fitness, Garden, Hair, Health, Hydrate, Inspire, Journal, Laundry, List, Lunch, Makeup, Meal, Mindfulness, Newspaper, Note, Paint, Pillow, Plant, Pray, Puzzle, Radio, Schedule, School, Shower, Skin, Sleep, Smile, Smoothie, Snacks, Study, Teeth, Walk, Wash, Weather, Work
Yesterday's Answer: Lifesavers

Treasures 22 through 43 can be purchased online at
www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Cousins throws for 2 touchdowns as Vikings beat Bears 17-9



CHICAGO
(AP)—Kirk Cousins threw two touchdown passes, and the Minnesota Vikings beat the struggling and short-handed Chicago Bears 17-9 on Monday night.

The Vikings (7-7), part of a tight pack of teams vying for one of the NFC's seven playoff spots, were in line for their most lopsided win before Justin Fields threw a touchdown pass to Jesper Horsted on the game's final play.

The final play aside, Minnesota withstood several scoring threats by Chicago down the stretch coming off a tight win over Pittsburgh in which they nearly blew a 29-0 lead.

Given the state of the Bears (4-10), the result was hardly a surprise. Chicago lost for the eighth time in nine games, and with 14 players on the reserve/COVID-19 list, that seemed inevitable. Receiver Allen Robinson was on it, as was the starting secondary.

The health issues also hit the coaching staff, with all three coordinators testing positive for the coronavirus during the week. Defensive coordinator Sean Desai was cleared to return hours before kickoff. The Bears had no update on offensive coordinator Bill Lazor and special teams coordinator Chris Tabor.

Cousins, who struggled last week, didn't exactly dominate in this one. He was 12 of 24 for 87 yards with an interception and got sacked four times. The two-time Pro Bowler also connected with Justin Jefferson for a 12-yard touchdown in the first quarter and threw a



AP

Minnesota Vikings running back Dalvin Cook (33) carries the ball as Chicago Bears cornerback Teez Tabor comes up for the tackle during the first half of an NFL football game Monday, Dec. 20, 2021, in Chicago.

7-yarder to Jefferson in the third.

Dalvin Cook ran for 89 yards, after going for 205 against Pittsburgh in a sooner-than-expected return from a dislocated shoulder.

D.J. Wonnum had three sacks and the Vikings recovered three fumbles on the way to their second straight win after back-to-back losses.

Fields threw for 285 yards and ran for 35 in his second game back after missing two with broken ribs. The rookie completed 26 of 39 passes playing behind a line miss-

ing both starting tackles, with right tackle Larry Borom on the COVID list and left tackle Jason Peters out with an ankle injury.

Robert Quinn and Akiem Hicks each had two sacks. Quinn has 16 this year, leaving him just shy of Hall of Famer Richard Dent's franchise record of 17 1/2 in 1984.

But it was another frustrating night for Chicago. Fans again booed at times and made their feelings about coach Matt Nagy known, chanting "Fire Nagy!"

The Vikings made it look

easy in grabbing a 7-0 lead. Cousins hit Jefferson in the left corner of the end zone for a 12-yard touchdown with just over five minutes left in the first quarter.

Fields was then stripped by Cameron Dantzler on a keeper near midfield. Anthony Barr recovered, leading to a field goal for the Vikings' Greg Joseph early in the second after some drama for the Bears. Nagy, apparently upset about an unsportsmanlike conduct call against Deon Bush, got flagged, himself, between quarters for arguing with the officials.

The Bears then had the ball on the Minnesota 10, only to come away empty-handed when Sheldon Richardson stripped Montgomery and recovered the fumble.

Chicago's Cairo Santos kicked a 34-yard field goal to cut it to 10-3 with 1:33 remaining in the half.

The Bears had another opportunity in the closing minute when Bush intercepted a deep pass that was nowhere near any receiver and returned it 27 yards to the Minnesota 39. Santos missed a 49-yard field goal on fourth-and-2 that ap-

peared to be tipped by Dalvin Tomlinson.

Cousins made it 17-3 midway through the third with a 7-yard touchdown pass to a wide open Smith-Marssette, who celebrated with a brief nap in the end zone. That drive was aided by two penalties, including one against Teez Tabor for a low hit on a blocker as he tried to trip up Cook on a third-and-18 deep in Minnesota territory.

Minnesota's Eric Kendricks got ejected in the fourth quarter for a helmet-to-helmet hit on a sliding Fields.

Carlson FG gives Raiders 16-14 win vs COVID-ravaged Browns

CLEVELAND (AP)—The Raiders didn't appreciate the NFL postponing their trip. They made sure their post-season chances weren't canceled as well.

Daniel Carlson's 48-yard field goal as time expired sent Las Vegas to a 16-14 win on Monday night over the COVID-19-depleted Cleveland Browns in a game pushed back two days by the NFL amid an uptick of virus cases across the league.

Down by a point, quarterback Derek Carr patiently drove the Raiders (7-7) into Cleveland territory in the final two minutes.

Then Carlson shrugged off being iced by the Browns to boot his winner, keeping Las Vegas in the playoff mix. The Raiders had been upset with the league's decision to delay the game from Saturday until Monday, with owner Mark Davis saying the delay was a "competitive disadvantage" for his team.

That all seemed to be forgotten as the Raiders danced off their sideline when Carlson's kick went through at the Dawg Pound end of FirstEnergy Stadium.

"It's been a long time coming to win a game like that in the end," said Raiders interim coach Rich Bisaccia, who has led the team through a turbulent season. "We understand the situation we're in and what the playoff race looks like."

The loss was devastating for the Browns (7-7), who would have vaulted into first place in the AFC North with a win. Instead, they fell into last place in the tightly packed division with three games remaining.

Due to a virus outbreak, the Browns were without quarterback Baker Mayfield, coach Kevin Stefanski and several other prominent players, including top receiver Jarvis Landry and edge rusher Jadeveon Clowney.

Carr understood why his

quarterback Nick Mullens had brought the Browns back from a 10-0 deficit in the third quarter and given them a 14-13 lead by throwing a 6-yard touchdown pass on fourth down to Harrison Bryant with 3:45 left.

And after Greedy Williams intercepted Carr, it appeared the Browns were on their way to taking their roller-coaster season to new heights. But Cleveland couldn't come up with a first down and gave the ball back to Carr with 1:50 left.

"After that interception, I told the guys 'Please, I promise we'll win it, just get the ball back,'" Carr said.

He then led a 51-yard drive, completing two long passes to Zay Jones to set up Carlson's kick that kicked new life into a team that has dealt with adversity and drama all season, including the resignation of coach Jon Gruden in October.

Carr understood why his teammates were so upset with the league's decision to

move the game.

"I wanted to play because I have a routine," Carr said. "But life's going to throw us curveballs. Whether I agree or don't, it doesn't matter."

The Browns were ravaged by positive COVID-19 cases last week. Despite the league postponing the game for two days, an asymptomatic Mayfield was unable to produce a negative test in time to play. Cleveland was without a dozen regulars.

The Browns were also without Stefanski, forced to miss his second big game in less than a year after he tested positive.

"That locker room right now is hurting," said acting Browns coach Mike Priefer. "That's the most I've seen it in that kind of pain. You're upset when you lose. Obviously you're joyous when you win. But when you lose that type of game, that was tough."

"They're pretty down right now."

Nick Chubb's 4-yard TD run came shortly after the Browns got a turnover they desperately needed. They

jarred the ball loose from Carr, who fumbled near midfield and appeared to injure his leg while being taken down by Sheldon Day and others.

Carr was checked by trainers before limping to the sideline. He came back for the Raiders' next possession and finished 25 of 38 for 236 yards and a touchdown to Bryan Edwards.

Cleveland's issues up front led to a major shift, with Pro Bowl left guard Joel Bitonio sliding over to play left tackle as Jedrick Wills Jr. was one of the Browns' COVID-19 cases.

Bitonio had a brief stint at tackle in training camp a few years back after perennial All-Pro Joe Thomas retired.

For the second straight year, Browns chief of staff Callie Brownson was called on to fill in for an assistant coach. With acting running backs coach Ryan Cordell out with COVID-19, Brownson stepped

in. Last year, she became the first woman in league history to work as a position coach during a game.

Brownson is in her second season with Cleveland. She was recently hired as coach of the U.S. women's national team for this summer's world championships.

Raiders linebacker Will Compton was a late scratch. He left the team to be with his family following his mother's unexpected death. Linebacker Divine Deablo hurt his shoulder in the third quarter. Safety Jonathan Abram immediately went to the locker room with a shoulder injury midway through the fourth period and didn't return.

Browns star defensive end Myles Garrett hurt his groin in the second half but stayed in. Defensive end Takk McKinley was carted off in the third quarter with a potentially serious ankle injury. McKinley covered his face and struggled to contain his emotions while being taken to the locker room.

Murray's triple-double carries Spurs past Clippers, 116-92



LOS ANGELES

(AP)—Dejounte Murray delivered his third triple-double in five games with 24 points, 13 assists and 12 rebounds, and the San Antonio Spurs beat the Los Angeles Clippers 116-92 on Monday night.

Jakob Poeltl added 17 points and 11 rebounds, while Doug McDermott scored 16 points as the Spurs improved to 2-1 on their four-game road trip. Murray also had a triple-double in a victory Friday at Utah and now has six triple-doubles on the season.

"I take pride in being a pass-first guy, knowing that I can score, knowing that I can get shots" said Murray, who recorded assists on the first three Spurs possessions of the second half and had five of his 13 assists in the third quarter. "For me, it's just getting that balance now and it will come over time."

Paul George had 25 points for the Clippers after missing the previous five games with a sprained right elbow. Ivica Zubac added 12 points and 12 rebounds for Los Angeles, while Terance Mann had 11 points as the Clippers lost for the third consecutive time.

San Antonio had little trouble knocking off the Clippers, just over a month after a 106-92 loss to them, also at Los Angeles. The Spurs won their sixth game on the road, matching their number of home victories.

Murray helped the Spurs take control early with eight points in the first quarter and 17 at halftime as San Antonio took a 62-48 lead. San Antonio pushed the advantage past the 20-point mark at 79-58 on a 3-pointer by Keldon Johnson with 5:02 remaining in the third quarter and led 101-71 with just under 10 minutes remaining.

"We stayed consistent to the game plan with how we were supposed to play on the defensive end," Murray said. "We know what they are capable of doing and we tried to make it uncomfortable for 48 minutes."

Johnson finished with 12 points and 12 rebounds, while Derrick White had 15 points for San Antonio. The Spurs outrebounded Los Angeles 67-43, while holding a 68-44 advantage in points in the paint.

"We have to rebound the basketball," Clippers coach Tyronn Lue said. "It's not going to be on the bigs a lot of times. They have to do a good job of rebounding, but our guards have to do a better job as well. The last four or five games it's been the guards sneaking in, grab-



San Antonio Spurs guard Dejounte Murray (5) shoots against Los Angeles Clippers guard Terance Mann (14) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles, Monday, Dec. 20, 2021.

consecutive games and six of their last eight.

Christian Wood had 23 points and 11 rebounds, but the Rockets lost for the fifth time in seven games. Jae'Sean Tate added 16 points.

Jazz 112, Hornets 102

In Salt Lake City, Rudy Gobert had 23 points and 21 rebounds to lead Utah over Charlotte.

Bojan Bogdanovic added 23 points for the Jazz, who blew a 22-point lead but finished strong to snap a two-game home losing streak. Donovan Mitchell chipped in 21.

LaMelo Ball led Charlotte with 21 points and 11 assists before fouling out in the final minute. Miles Bridges added 21 points and 10 rebounds.

Terry Rozier chipped in 20 points but the Hornets could not fully overcome another dismal start and dropped their third straight on the road.

bing rebounds."

Despite George's return, the Clippers lacked offensive flow without Marcus Morris Sr., who was missing his second consecutive game in the NBA's health and safety protocols. Morris had scored at least 20 points in five of his last seven games.

76ers 108, Celtics 103

In Boston, Joel Embiid scored 17 of his 41 points in the fourth quarter, hitting three jumpers in the final minutes and three free throws in the last four seconds to ice it as the Philadelphia 76ers beat the Boston Celtics 108-103 on Monday night.

With both teams fighting COVID-19 outbreaks, Embiid also had 10 rebounds and a steal on the Celtics' last-chance inbound pass while playing 40 minutes, 14 seconds — a season high for a game that didn't go to overtime.

Seth Curry scored 26 points and Tobias Harris had 25 for Philadelphia.

Jaylen Brown scored 30 points, Jayson Tatum had 17 and Enes Kanter Freedom had 15 points and 11 rebounds for the Celtics, who had seven players in COVID-19 protocol, with Robert Williams III a late scratch for personal reasons.

Warriors 113, Kings 98

In San Francisco, Stephen Curry scored 30 points as the Warriors celebrated him for the 3-point record in his first home game since breaking Ray Allen's mark, and Golden State held off Sacramento in a matchup of short-handed rivals.

Curry received a video tribute in the first quarter with

highlights of the two-time MVP setting the record during the Warriors' 105-96 victory over the Knicks last Tuesday at Madison Square Garden. He passed Allen's 2,973 3s that were tops for 10 years.

Draymond Green notched his franchise-leading 31st career triple-double and first this season with 16 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists on a night his son, Draymond Jr., was just as big of a star working as a towel and equipment kid.

Tyrese Haliburton had 24 points and 11 assists to lead Sacramento, which was down six players plus interim head coach Alvin Gentry. Assistant Doug Christie stepped in as acting coach.

Thunder 102, Grizzlies 99

In Memphis, Tenn., Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 23 points, Josh Giddey added 19 points and 11 assists, and Oklahoma City beat Ja Morant and Memphis.

Morant returned from injury and the league's COVID-19 protocols after a 12-game absence and finished with 16 points. Desmond Bane led Memphis with 25 points and Dillon Brooks scored 19.

The Thunder overcame an 89-84 deficit in the final 4:36 and took the lead for good at 96-95 on Giddey's layup with 50 seconds remaining.

The last time these teams met, the Grizzlies set an NBA record for margin of victory in a 152-79 thrashing.

Bulls 133, Rockets 118

In Chicago, DeMar DeRozan scored 26 points and Chicago beat Houston.

DeRozan, who scored 38 points in Sunday's win over the Lakers after missing three games due to the NBA's COVID-19 protocols, received

help from five teammates who scored in double figures.

The Bulls never trailed and led by 25 points during the first half. They have won two

Lakers' Anthony Davis out at least 4 weeks for sprained knee

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Los Angeles Lakers forward Anthony Davis will be out for at least four weeks after spraining a ligament in his left knee.

The Lakers announced the latest major setback Saturday for Davis, the eight-time All-Star with a lengthy injury history, particularly since moving to Los Angeles in 2019.

Davis hurt himself in the third quarter of the Lakers' road loss to the Timberwolves on Friday night. Minnesota forward Jaden McDaniels collided with Davis while off-balance and sent the Lakers star to the court. Davis had trouble getting off the court.

The Lakers conducted an

MRI exam in Chicago on Saturday that revealed the sprain. Davis will be reevaluated in four weeks, taking his latest injury absence into mid-January at least.

Davis had missed only three of the Lakers' first 30 games due to injury this season. Instead, LeBron James has endured the biggest injury problems this season for Los Angeles' star-studded roster.

Davis played in 62 games in his first season with the Lakers before they won their 17th championship in the Florida bubble. Davis then appeared in only 36 games last season while dogged by persistent injury woes that ultimately pre-

vented him from finishing the season in uniform.

Davis is averaging 23.3 points, 9.9 rebounds, 2.9 assists and 2.0 blocked shots per game this season.

Despite numerous injury problems and a current spate of COVID-19 woes, the Lakers (16-14) began the weekend in sixth place in the Western Conference. Avery Bradley, Talen Horton-Tucker, Dwight Howard, Malik Monk, Kendrick Nunn and Austin Reaves are all currently in the NBA's health and safety protocols.

Los Angeles is scheduled to play at Chicago on Sunday night.



Los Angeles Lakers forward Anthony Davis (3) holds his leg after falling in the third quarter of an NBA basketball game with the Minnesota Timberwolves Friday, Dec. 17, 2021, in Minneapolis.

Search on for NMI Sports HoF inductees



The Northern Marianas Sports Association is now accepting nominations for the NMI Sports Hall of Fame, Class of 2022.

Nominations are open to individuals who have earned distinction in NMI sports either as athletes or officials (coaches and administrators included). Nominees must

have resided on the islands for at least 10 years and should be at least 35 years old.

NMSA-member federations, any NMI citizen, and the NMSA Hall of Fame Committee can submit nominees and nominations must be submitted with justification or rationale to marianassports@gmail.com.

For the Class of 2022, a maximum of four individuals may be inducted—three athletes and one official. The NMI Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2022 will be enshrined at the NMSA Sports Banquet in

March next year. Deadline for submission of nominations is on Jan. 31, 2022.

So far, the NMSA has enshrined 40 individuals into the elite group. The first inductees were the Class of 2004 led by Saipan Swim Club co-founders Bill and Jeane Sakovich. The inaugural class also included swimmer Mike Villagomez and Antonio Rogolifo, who was enshrined to the NMI Hall of Fame as an athlete, representing basketball. The latest inductees were baseball player Chris Nelson, basketball's Jerry Ayuyu, ath-

letics official Louie Wabol, and basketball coach Rufino Aguon, who were enshrined in 2020. The NMSA did not hold induction and awards ceremony for athletes in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (PR)

In this 2020 file photo, Chris Nelson, left, and Jerry Ayuyu are all smiles as they are enshrined into the CNMI Sports Hall of Fame during the Northern Marianas Sports Association Annual Banquet at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

ROSELYN B. MONROY



TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Brooklyn	21	9	.700	—
Philadelphia	16	15	.516	5½
Boston	15	16	.484	6½
Toronto	14	15	.483	6½
New York	13	17	.433	8

Southeast Division

Miami	18	13	.581	—
Washington	16	15	.516	2
Charlotte	16	17	.485	3
Atlanta	14	15	.483	3
Orlando	6	25	.194	12

Central Division

Chicago	19	10	.655	—
Cleveland	19	12	.613	1
Milwaukee	19	13	.594	1½
Indiana	13	18	.419	7
Detroit	5	24	.172	14

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Memphis	19	13	.594	—
Dallas	14	15	.483	3½
San Antonio	12	18	.400	6
Houston	10	21	.323	8½
New Orleans	10	21	.323	8½

Northwest Division

Utah	21	9	.700	—
Denver	15	14	.517	5½
Minnesota	15	15	.500	6
Portland	13	18	.419	8½
Oklahoma City	10	19	.345	10½

Pacific Division

Phoenix	24	5	.828	—
Golden State	25	6	.806	—
L.A. Clippers	16	15	.516	9
L.A. Lakers	16	15	.516	9
Sacramento	13	19	.406	12½

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	9	5	0	.643	367	227
Buffalo	8	6	0	.571	394	243
Miami	7	7	0	.500	285	312
e-N.Y. Jets	3	11	0	.214	250	428

South

Tennessee	9	5	0	.643	337	309
Indianapolis	8	6	0	.571	398	300
e-Houston	3	11	0	.214	207	372
e-Jacksonville	2	12	0	.143	196	370

North

Baltimore	8	6	0	.571	334	315
Cincinnati	8	6	0	.571	369	303
Pittsburgh	7	6	1	.536	291	335
Cleveland	7	7	0	.500	292	305

West

Kansas City	10	4	0	.714	385	296
L.A. Chargers	8	6	0	.571	379	370
Denver	7	7	0	.500	285	243
Las Vegas	7	7	0	.500	299	374

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

Dallas	10	4	0	.714	401	393
Philadelphia	6	7	0	.462	337	291
Washington	6	7	0	.462	266	324
N.Y. Giants	4	10	0	.266	238	331

South

Tampa Bay	10	4	0	.714	410	306
New Orleans	7	7	0	.500	313	285
Atlanta	6	8	0	.429	258	384
Carolina	5	9	0	.357	271	313

North

y-Green Bay	11	3	0	.786	359	302
Minnesota	7	7	0	.500	361	342
Chicago	4					



**Cousins throws for 2 touchdowns
as Vikings beat Bears 17-9** PAGE 21

Saipan Tribune Sports



**Search for NMI Sports Hof
inductees on**

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24 WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2021

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Tenorio is top CNMI swim sprinter

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

John Tenorio made CNMI swimming history in Day 3 of the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships last Saturday inside the cavernous Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Juhn Tenorio relaxes after setting the CNMI record in the men's 50m freestyle last Saturday in the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships last Sunday at the Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Shoko Litulumar at the start of the women's 50m backstroke in the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships last Sunday at the Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

This, after the 17-year-old Marianas High School student broke the CNMI record in the men's 50m freestyle with an incredible time of 23.97.

"I feel great that I got a 23.97! I can't believe that I am at the level



where my senior swimmers were. I grew up idolizing those guys and it feels unreal that I am in that position. I will make my best efforts to inspire the younger generation just like how my

See TENORIO on Page 23

ACS: We shall return!

» **COVID, car trouble stymy Agape
runners in Christmas Island Relay**

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez of Team Santa, middle, accepts all her teammates' gold medals in the awards ceremony for Northern Marianas Athletics' Annual Christmas Island Relay last Monday at the Oleai Track and field. At left is silver medal-winning Agape Team B and right is Saipan Swim Club, which won the bronze.

MAKR RABAGO

Va'a selects national team for Mini Games

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Northern Marianas National Paddle Sports Federation has concluded its tryouts for the CNMI National Outrigger Canoe Team for next year's Pacific Mini Games and has selected 24 paddlers—12 men and 12 women—for the national paddling team.

NMNPSF president Justin Andrew said the umbrella organization of all

va'a clubs in the CNMI has submitted the names of the successful paddlers to emerge from the training pool to the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games Organizing Committee.

"We have concluded our tryout phase. We have our final 14 men and 14 women. I'm preparing a report to Pacific Mini Games Organizing Committee and Northern Marianas Sports Association to inform them of our final roster of men and women. We are now transitioning to the training phase," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Andrew also said the surge of CO-

See VA'A on Page 23



The Northern Marianas National Paddle Sports Federation has selected 24 paddlers for the CNMI National Outrigger Canoe Team for next year's Pacific Mini Games. File photo shows paddlers at a local competition.

ROSELYN B. MONROY